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SCHOOL ETHOS AND ACADEMIC PRODUCTIVITY:
THE CATHOLIC EFFECT



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DECLARATION

Parts of chapter three and seven make use of data which form the basis of two published papers by Andrew Morris, 'The Academic Performance of Catholic Schools' (School Organisation, 14, 1. pp. 81-89) and 'The Catholic School Ethos: its effect on post-16 student academic achievement' (Educational Studies, 21, 1. pp. 67-83).

However, all analysis and discussion of the data that has been used in this research is original.

SUMMARY

This thesis is a study of the comparative academic effectiveness of Catholic schools in England. It uses a combination of quantitative and qualitative approaches to investigate the hypothesis that, pupils who attend Catholic comprehensive schools will, all things being equal, achieve higher levels of academic attainment in GCSE examinations at the age of sixteen than similar pupils attending other maintained comprehensive schools.

The study reviews the published findings of research in this field in England and the United States of America and reports previously unpublished analysis of the results of school inspections made under Section 9 of the Education Act 1992 by OFSTED. There has been very little empirical research into the academic effectiveness of Catholic schools in England. Findings that have been reported have arisen from studies which were focused on other issues and this facet of the results has not been investigated further. In contrast, in the USA there has been a significant quantity of large scale research indicating the academic superiority of schools in the Catholic sector.

The research uses a simple form of multi-level modelling as the main analytical tool to compare the performance of pupils ($n = 2335$) attending eighteen comprehensive schools in a medium sized shire county. In addition, a case study approach is used to compare two different models of Catholic school in the sample to highlight factors which may contribute to their differing levels of academic productivity.

The findings partly confirm previous research that has indicated the superiority of Catholic schools in England and extends understanding of the possible causes of that superiority. The study suggests areas for further research and possible applications of the findings for Church authorities and other providers of maintained schools.

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PREFACE

Schools provide for society one of the major formal ways in which the knowledge, understanding and achievements of one generation are handed on to the next. They are an important mechanism for developing and transmitting values, attitudes and a vision of the very nature of humanity which, in turn, help create the type of society in which they function. When an educational system is deficient there is good reason for concern. If it breaks down, society itself is threatened.

The current perceived shortcomings of the educational system in England have been widely publicised in recent years but there is no consensus as to the necessary reforms or even an agreed theoretical basis for debate beyond the acceptance that 'good' schools are necessary for a healthy society. This failure may be exacerbated by conceptual confusion arising from the variety of terms used to describe school performance which often indiscriminately mingle statements or value judgements about the nature of education with descriptions referring to the ability of schools to achieve specific outcome targets. The former belongs in the realm of educational philosophy, the latter is more to do with physical measurement. Thus it could be possible for a school to be highly effective in helping pupils achieve educational targets yet be deemed to be failing because it does not conform to a value judgement of what constitutes 'good' educational practice at any one particular time.

The seminal work of Rutter et al (1979) in the secondary sector of education marked the beginning of a profound change in the climate of opinion in England concerning the importance of the independent effects of schools on academic progress and levels of pupil achievement. The equally significant work of Mortimore et al (1988) in the primary field

supported the findings of Rutter and his colleagues in showing that schools do have a noticeable influence on the academic attainment of individual pupils.

Consequently, it is now generally accepted that organisational factors are important variables affecting the quality of education provided in schools and there is a considerable body of research studies showing their probable nature and extent. Though school effects do not exert as great an influence as home background, the extent to which individual schools can enhance or depress pupil performance has become a focus of public attention in recent years. Concerns about school effectiveness and school improvement now form much of the substance of educational debate of academics, politicians and parents.

However, in England, the current public debate about effectiveness is often separated from philosophical issues concerning the nature and purpose of education and it is conducted under an assumption that all schools seek the same primary objectives. Reasons for the lack of philosophical debate lie in the growth of state involvement and control of schools, the rise of secularism in society, the dominance of the concept of liberal education in the public mind, and the relatively small size of that part of the publicly maintained sector that hold religious views about the nature of humanity and, therefore, of education.

The idea of liberal education is now so well established that it is regarded by many as the only legitimate or appropriate form for a publicly funded system and, consequently, the nature of education is rarely considered in political debate. In the more recent years since 1944, beliefs about the purpose of education have moved away from consideration of its intrinsic worth and its value to the individual towards more utilitarian views. The dominant attitude currently promoted by government, and seemingly accepted by the general public, highlights the economic benefits of education for the individual and the nation.

The absence of frequent public debate about areas of such critical importance to the well-being of society is surprising given that we live in a multi-ethnic, multi-cultural and pluralistic society. On the other hand, matters concerning the role of schools in relation to the development of social morality, community and a sense of common purpose have been raised more recently and have achieved a certain prominence in the media. The lack of debate about the influence of educational purpose on schools effectiveness is, perhaps, even more surprising in the light of findings reported by both the Rutter and Mortimore research teams of the high levels of effectiveness of denominational schools, which might be presumed to have very distinctive and different primary aims compared to others in the maintained sector. However, neither team followed up that particular finding and it has remained somewhat neglected as an area of study.

This research has its basis in the general concern in both educational and political circles with school effectiveness. It is not directly concerned with philosophical debates about what does, or does not, constitute good education. It arose out of my personal and professional commitment to the promotion and development of Catholic education and from my specific interest, as the headteacher of a Catholic comprehensive school, in the relative levels of pupil's academic achievement in the Catholic sector compared to those attending other publicly maintained schools. As it progressed it became a two pronged investigation.

The first part, which uses a quantitative approach to add to the small body of data concerning the academic performance of Catholic institutions, compares the effectiveness of comprehensive schools in one local authority. The second, and more extensive, area of my research considers the school processes involved in two different types of Catholic school, illuminating the relationships between their academic effectiveness and elements of their culture that determine their 'Catholicity'.

There is already some evidence that suggests Catholic schools in England may be more effective academically than other local authority maintained schools in terms of the examination results achieved at 16+ (Rutter et al, 1979; Nuttall, 1990; Thomas et al, 1993; Morris, 1994, Woodhead, 1996). However, it is not conclusive and there is very little published research directly focused on this phenomenon.

There is a more extensive body of research findings originating in the United States of America (Coleman et al, 1982; Greeley, 1982; Hoffer et al, 1985; Hill et al, 1990; Bryk et al, 1993). It indicates that pupils attending Catholic schools will, all other things being equal, achieve higher levels of academic achievement than similar pupils in municipal schools. The evidence also suggests that they are particularly effective with pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds. However, differences in the educational systems and culture of the two countries do not allow simple direct comparisons to be made. For example, Catholic schools in the USA are predominantly private rather than municipally maintained and, therefore, do not operate under the financial or political control of the local electorate.

The Catholic Church is responsible for the education of around four per cent of young people throughout the world. It does not see education simply as a means of self fulfilment, or just for the general economic benefit of society, but as an integral part of what it regards as its God-given mission to evangelise. It holds a specific religious view of the nature and purpose of human life and, therefore, of the educational process. In England and Wales, Catholic schools educate about ten per cent of the current pupil population. They claim to have a distinctive nature and purpose that marks them out from other maintained schools which enables them to serve primarily the religious needs of their faith community. Their provision has involved considerable capital expense and a responsibility on individual parishes to contribute to the schools' ongoing maintenance.

They claim to provide an education that is appropriate to any civic institution but taught within a specifically religious context which permeates all aspect of the schools' day-to-day activities.

In the current period of great upheaval in the English educational system Catholic schools, like others, adapt and respond to changing circumstances. In an increasingly multi-cultural, multi-ethnic society, Catholic schools cannot isolate themselves from its social effects. At such a time there is a need for an informed debate about Catholic schools and what they offer to the Catholic community they were originally set up to serve as well as their contribution to society generally. However, while there has been an impressive and remarkable commitment by the Catholic Church to education in England , it has undertaken relatively little research into the effectiveness of its schools as agents of Catholic socialisation. There has been even less into their academic effectiveness.

Consequently, there is a need for more information and analysis to inform the general debate on the role of Catholic schools in the next century. In responding to change the Catholic Church may need to accept there can be different valid approaches to Catholic education in differing social circumstances and consider alternative roles for individual schools in the light of their effectiveness in achieving specific goals.

My study contributes to that debate by investigating the academic effectiveness of Catholic schools and comparing them to their non-Catholic, non-religious counterparts. In undertaking it I am not so much concerned with philosophical concepts of 'good' education or justifications of religious or secular based models, but with the concept of school effectiveness and the specific beneficial effects that a Catholic education may provide for pupils, particularly in the area of academic achievement. For a school to be effective implies that there is some pre-determined target, or set of targets, established for

it and some means of measuring whether they have been achieved. In this case I am primarily concerned with the levels of achievement in public examinations of pupils attending Catholic schools and comparing them with those of similar pupils in non-Catholic schools.

My thesis is that the form of religiously based socialisation promoted by Catholic schools in England is broadly supportive of academic aims and outcomes. I argue that the traditional approach to the provision of education in England and Wales taken by the Catholic Church enables Catholic schools to establish a school environment that is particularly conducive to helping pupils achieve academic success.

I argue further that the distinctive religious vision of education inherent to the traditional model of Catholic school, though academically effective for pupils of all abilities, is especially so for the less able and those from lower socio-economic groups.

I have divided my study into three main sections. The first reviews existing literature concerning school effectiveness in general and the religious and academic effectiveness of Catholic schools in particular. It also reports the results of my research which compared the academic performance of Catholic and non-Catholic comprehensive schools within one local education authority. The results are clear, but not conclusive, and point to the need for further work on the nature of Catholic education.

The second section contributes to that further research through case studies of two schools having very different approaches to Catholic education, one which can be characterised as 'traditional' or 'holistic', the other 'progressive' or 'pluralistic'. The studies investigate each school's understanding of the purpose of Catholic education and the degree to which it matches the expectations of their various stakeholders. In particular,

they reflect how this understanding is realised in school organisation, values, attitudes and practices and consider how these factors may influence pupils' academic achievement.

Taken together, the findings in these two sections suggest that in England:

- *all other things being equal, Catholic schools are particularly effective academically*
- *their academic effectiveness is positively associated with the nature, quality and effectiveness of the religious education provided*
- *their academic effectiveness is positively associated with the school's effectiveness as an agent of Catholic socialisation and the development of a Catholic cultural identity*
- *the traditional type of Catholic school in England is comparatively more effective in achieving both religious and academic outcomes than the progressive model*

The third section of the study considers and evaluates the main findings of my research in as much as they are capable of being generalised beyond the specific case studies to wider applications in the Catholic and national education system.

SECTION ONE

SCHOOL EFFECTIVENESS AND CATHOLIC EDUCATION

This section is written in four chapters, the first two of which review the general literature concerning school effectiveness and the characteristics of effective schools. The third chapter considers the evidence which specifically relates to Catholic schools in terms of their religious and academic effectiveness. The fourth reports the results of my quantitative study of the comparative academic performance of comprehensive schools within one shire county.

At the beginning of chapter one I describe the main influences of central and local government on the pattern and provision of education before reviewing the changing perceptions, over recent years, of the relative influence of the school and home on the levels of pupils academic achievement. Then I discuss the current research findings as to whether schools are equally effective for all pupils irrespective of gender, ethnicity and social class.

In chapter two I cite the main, generally accepted, factors which determine institutional effectiveness. These fall into two categories relating to organisational characteristics and educational processes. In turn, these factors can be grouped under the three headings of '*leadership*', '*school mission*' and '*school culture*'. I explore those concepts within the general context of their impact upon the effectiveness of all schools not just those in the Catholic sector.

In chapter three I consider the effectiveness of Catholic schools, linking both their religious and academic roles, drawing on the research evidence available from studies in

England and the USA. There are no specific studies of the academic effectiveness of Catholic schools in England comparing them to their non-Catholic counterparts. To provide some data, I compare the academic effectiveness of the comprehensive schools within one shire county. Within the sample ($n = 18$) there are two Catholic and sixteen non-Catholic schools. By 'effectiveness' I mean the degree to which pupils attending one particular school achieve higher or lower examination grades overall than similar pupils attending the 'average' school in the sample.

I use a multi-level modelling approach taking into account appropriate background factors. I expected to find evidence of higher levels of effectiveness in the two Catholic schools, but the results, though clear, are not conclusive. One of the two is the most academically effective school in the sample; the other the least. The results point to the need for further research into the effects on academic achievement of differing models of Catholic school. The second section of this study contributes to that further research through case studies of the two schools which have adopted very different views of their religious mission.

CHAPTER 1

TWO DECADES OF SCHOOL EFFECTIVENESS RESEARCH: SO WHAT HAS CHANGED?

Introduction

The concept of 'effectiveness' implies specific actions by an individual or institution that accomplish some objective pre-determined aim (Barnard, 1938). However, the term does not, of itself, imply anything about the worth of the objective or the means by which it is achieved. For example, Fagin's school for thieves could be regarded as effective but hardly as desirable. Consequently, judgements on school effectiveness are inevitably tied to the concept of morally desirable aims dictated by the perceived beneficial nature and purpose of schools (Ouston & Maughan, 1985).

In the United Kingdom the school effectiveness literature often makes a distinction between the effective and the good school. Effective schools are those that score relatively high on external test/examination results, whereas good schools are those in which there are high external test/examination results *and* high quality pupil nurturing, a combination of cognitive and affective development (Riley, 1992). Such distinctions are readily found in reports of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and government surveys, for example, (Ten Good Schools, DES, 1977; Secondary Schools: An appraisal by HMI, DES, 1988). This may be a reflection of the long tradition of English education that sees the school as being a community with as much emphasis placed on its role in developing values as on the acquisition of knowledge (Plowden Report, DES, 1967).

The process of developing effective schools will be influenced by decisions made by government, by schools and by individuals within them. Government, both central and

local, determine the overall pattern of educational provision. Schools determine their own internal organisation and procedures. Individual teachers choose their particular pedagogical methods and, to some extent, the curriculum content.

Patterns of Education Provision: Central and Local Government Policy

Within the history of the development of state involvement in education in England can be discerned three main intertwined purposes, economic, social and humanitarian. Education has been regarded as a means of increasing the long term prosperity of the nation through a better educated and trained workforce. It has been seen as a way in which the lives of individuals could be improved or controlled, and through them, society as a whole. It has also formed an essential part of the process of socialisation of children as they develop into fully functioning adults (Wardle, 1977). While the emphasis has varied at different times, the economic argument has predominated at times of major changes in the educational system which, until recent years, have been made at the time of war.

Education and Economic Growth

The Education Act of 1870 was partly a response to the successes of Prussia in the Franco-Prussian War which were "attributed as much to her educational system as to her military organisation" (Barnard, 1961, p. 119). The Education Act of 1918 enabled education to "play a leading part in the work of reconstruction" after the 1914-18 war (Barnard, 1961, p. 231). Since 1944, some of the major government sponsored reports that have influenced the development of education had economic prosperity as a guiding principle. Crowther (1959), for example, was asked to consider the education of the 15-18 age group "in relation to the changing social and industrial needs of our society" (preface, p. xxvii). Similarly, Newsom (1963), who was concerned with approximately half the pupil population of secondary schools who were not receiving an effective education, highlighted the view that the country could not afford such economic wastage (para 3).

That effective schools are necessary to develop the wealth of the nation is generally accepted, though hard to prove. Bowen (1972) reviews three major ways in which economists explain the relationship between education and economic prosperity. One approach measures the correlation between levels of educational activity and some index of economic activity. A second approach identifies measurable economic inputs over a period of time with as much of the total increase in economic output as is possible. That which cannot be identified, the residual, is attributed to education. A third method looks at individuals and relates their lifetime earnings to the length and extent of their education. All approaches involve complex economic arguments and a series of assumptions and effects which are difficult to quantify accurately (Denison, 1962; Vaizey & Debeauvais, 1965; Vaizey, 1968; Blaug, 1970). However, no one has suggested that education is a waste of a nations' resources and countries act as if it is of long-term benefit, making efforts to secure a more effective educational system and a better educated population.

Education and Social Justice

Education policy in England at governmental level designed to achieve greater effectiveness of the system has been, at different times, under various degrees of control, sometimes quite rigid and centralised, while at others quite free with much delegated to the schools. The 1944 Education Act gave the task of administering state education to local education authorities (LEAs). The Act reflects a concern with the social benefits of education which was "to contribute to the spiritual, moral, mental and physical development of the community" (section 7) and to be appropriate to the needs of individual pupils "in view of their different ages, abilities and aptitudes" (section 8.i). For many years governments and local authorities showed little interest in the regular and routine gathering of specific information about the results of public investment in individual schools, or in the system as a whole, and decisions concerning the organisational structure of schools within a local authority were determined locally. In the

1960's, some LEAs began to replace the tri-partite system of secondary education set up by the 1944 Act with comprehensive schools. The belief that the system of education could not only influence overall attainment but also have far reaching social effects ensured that the relative effectiveness of selective and comprehensive school systems in academic achievement became a focus of strong debate. Marks et al (1983) found that pupils in local authorities where a selective system had been retained achieved examination results considerable better than those in authorities having a fully comprehensive system. Their findings were challenged strongly by others arguing that once social class and other relevant background factors were controlled such differences were minimal or could not be found (Steedman, 1983; Gray et al, 1984).

The Search for Effectiveness: A Matter of Control?

The social argument prevailed and by the mid to late 1970s most, though not all, LEAs had established systems of secondary education based on neighbourhood comprehensive schools. Changing political priorities and concerns about the effectiveness of secondary education towards the end of the 1970s and early 1980s led to a shift in power towards greater centralised control and attempts by government to determine more directly what happened in the schools. Examples of greater governmental involvement can be seen in the financial incentives used to encourage schools to purchase computers and in the targeting of funds for such educational priorities as the Technical and Vocational Education Initiative (TVEI). Other examples of government targeting have been seen in staff training. More direct methods of government control were established by the Education Act 1988 which gave hitherto unheard of powers to the Secretary of State for Education. Among other things, it introduced the concepts of local management of schools (LMS) and self governing grant maintained (GM) schools opting out of local authority control. The Act introduced a process that determined curriculum content and influenced teaching methods and together with subsequent government legislation ensured

greater public scrutiny and accountability of school performance with measures ranging from the requirement to provide specific information in a prospectus, to the publishing of national tables of schools test and examination results.

The direct effect of these more recent macro-policy changes on the quality of school outcomes has not been clearly established by the research though there is some evidence from the United States of America suggesting that structural changes designed to increase levels of school autonomy, with a corresponding decrease in the control of local government, may help raise academic standards (Hunter, 1979; Chubb & Moe, 1988, 1990). However, the educational systems of England and the USA have some notable differences and the more recent findings of Chubb & Moe advocating the effectiveness of market control of education have been strongly attacked on both methodological and theoretical grounds (Tweedie, 1990; Riley, 1990; Bryk & Lee, 1992; Goldstein, 1993). In England, an assessment of the impact of grant maintained status finds little evidence to indicate that educational standards has risen in schools which have left local authority control (Woodhead, 1996, para. 50-51).

Educational Funding and Effective Schools

Prior to the system of Local Management of Schools introduced by the 1988 Education Act, input variables under the direct control of the education authority could be measured and changed relatively easily by increasing financial support. Factors depending upon the overall levels of financial support given to schools, such as the size of schools or individual classes, the age and quality of school buildings and compensatory education programmes, were either found to bear little relationship to pupil achievement, both at the institutional and authority level (Purkey & Smith, 1983; Reid et al, 1987), or the research findings were contradictory. Some studies have shown that increased effectiveness seem to be associated with smaller classes and school size (Reynolds, 1982; Mortimore et al, 1988),

though, taken overall, the research gives a very unclear picture. Nor is there much recent evidence to link increased teacher salary levels to better pupil performance, although research in the 1960s hinted that this might be the case (Reid et al, 1987).

The effect of the level of overall financial support on pupil performance is also unclear. Jesson et al (1987) compared the performance of all English education authorities on two output measures, percentage of pupils obtaining five or more 'O' levels, and the percentage of pupils obtaining three or more CSE or 'O' levels. It showed little difference between them. After taking into account the socio-economic status of the authority catchment area, the percentage of pupils from one parent families, the percentage of pupils from UK born families and secondary school expenditure per pupil, the efficiency ratings ranged from 0.88 (poorest) to 1.00 (best), indicating the very small gap between the best and worst performing authorities.

School Policy and Practice

Since 1944, and until the 1970s, research findings presented a very confused and incomplete picture of the relative effectiveness of different schools. Many parents believed that some were better than others, had decided views that supported their belief and a willingness to make sacrifices to ensure access to a particular school for their children.

However, there was little empirical evidence readily and universally available to support parental opinion. On the other hand, it is certainly the case that, since the early 19th century, as the state became increasingly involved in the provision of education, professional educators have known that schools differed in their quality and in the learning environment they offered (Adams, 1882; Barnard, 1961; Clegg & Megson, 1973), though the relative influence of home and school of levels of achievement was not so clearly understood.

Academic Achievement: A Product of School or Home?

The Plowden Report (1967) included an assessment of primary schools into nine categories ranging from those described as "in most respects ... of outstanding quality", to those described as "a bad school where children suffer from laziness, indifference, gross incompetence or unkindness on the part of the staff" (paras. 270-276). It was recognised that schools differed in their effectiveness in influencing social behaviour as well as academic attainment, though the extent to which schools could counter social trends was disputed. Some professional school administrators believed that schools could do much to combat delinquency and juvenile crime even in adverse social circumstances and regarded that view as a reflection of common sense (Clegg, 1962). Clegg, however, also noted that many competent and committed school teachers were diametrically opposed to his views. Such attitudes at that time can be characterised by the opinion that:

"however good the schools may be, however effective the emphasis in the classroom of the need for worthwhile standards and the importance of restraint and self-discipline, the schools must lose a battle in which so many agencies influence young people in other directions"

(Alexander, 1959, quoted by Barnard, 1961 p. 332).

In outlining an investigation of the causes of delinquency, McNally (1965) indicated that the prevailing belief suggested schools could do something to alleviate the problem, but noted the lack of authoritative data and locally based statistics on which to base sound conclusions. Clegg and Megson (1973) regarded the fact of school differences as self-evident and argued in particular that schools differed greatly in the way they treated children in distress to the extent that "there are some schools where children seem to shed their distress the moment they cross the threshold" (p. 38). The attributes they identified as being associated with the good schools in this respect included many of those identified in the effective schools literature a decade later.

Despite the recognition that schools did differ so much from each other, the prevailing view among researchers and others during the 1960s was that the academic achievements of pupils were mainly determined by personal qualities or family background (Swift, 1966; Plowden, 1967). Consequently, there was little systematic study of the differential performance of schools. Studies in England of the process of selection for grammar school (Floud & Halsey, 1957; Swift, 1965), educational attainment (Douglas, 1964), academic failure in grammar schools (Dale & Griffith, 1966), delinquency (Deacon, 1965), truancy and school phobia (Cooper, 1966a, 1966b) and length of schooling (Douglas et al, 1968), all attested to the influence of social class on performance and the relative success of middle class pupils. In the USA, major research findings showed that individual schools had very little effect on the overall level of academic achievement of their pupils (Coleman, 1966; Jencks et al, 1972).

While the prevailing view tended to obscure school effects, there were some suggestions during the 1960s that the quality of schools could make a difference to educational attainment (Douglas et al, 1967; King, 1965;) and that there was a relationship between internal school organisation and the development of an anti-group culture leading to academic failure (Lacey, 1966). Even so, there was little statistical evidence available to indicate how or why this should be so. Douglas's analysis of educational attainment and length of schooling among lower working class pupils of borderline ability and above noted that quality of school staffing and equipment were associated with the age of leaving and that "the interest of parents alone is insufficient to counter the deficiencies of the school" (Douglas et al, 1967, p. 197). King's research concluded that the wide differences in levels of mathematical achievement that he found among pupils attending differing types of school were not solely linked to differences in ability (King, 1965, p. 80). In addition to academic achievement other differential school effects were noted at this time, such as delinquency rates (Power et al, 1967).

Contrary to such items of research and the common sense view that schools did differ in effectiveness, the main climate of opinion during the 1960s and early 1970s was that the way in which a school operated had little influence on the academic performance of the individual children attending it. The prevailing view in academic circles was that schools were relatively unimportant factors compared to inherited personal characteristics and home background in determining academic and social outcomes at the end of the years of formal education. A typical view of many within the school system was that one simply had to accept the social background of pupils as a problem or blessing to be dealt with (Clegg, 1962). Consequently, there was little or no empirical research into individual school effectiveness before the mid-1970s.

The 'Effective Schools' Paradigm

In his reviews of the research, Reynolds (1982, 1985, 1992) suggests several reasons why this reluctance to acknowledge the effect of schools should be so. He cites the dominating influence of psychology in educational research with its particular emphasis on the determining aspects of the home and early life in abnormal behaviour. Another factor may have been the influence of neo-Marxist oriented sociologists who emphasised the inevitable and determinist nature of society on the individual. He also pointed to practical difficulties and an absence of reliable measures for obtaining data in a politically sensitive area, suggesting that the educational establishment had a vested unwillingness to accept that it may be at fault. All these factors, he argues, produced a climate in which "even if data were not available to support exclusively family-based explanations, and even if there was conflicting evidence, research studies were reported in ways that made them 'fit' with existing dominant paradigms" (Reynolds 1985, p. 2).

In the late 1970s came the first empirical studies suggesting that the academic and social background of pupils were not the determining factors in a child's achievement at school.

In a study of secondary schools in Wales, Reynolds (1976, 1982) reports significant differences in effectiveness which he argues are attributed to aspects of the individual institutions concerned. Rutter et al (1979) argue that the way in which schools are organised and run can make a significant difference in raising standards, not only of academic results, but also of behaviour. He and his colleagues argue further, quoting the findings of Gray et al (1980), that while the future status and earnings potential of pupils are influenced by a host of variables external to schools, "... there are school associations with employment insofar as schooling relates to attendance, school dropout, examination success and continuation of secondary schooling into the sixth year ..." (Rutter et al, 1980a).

However, such evidence, although it was generally welcomed, received criticism for its theoretical modelling and methodology (Ackland & Bloomer, 1979; Evans, 1982). Rutter's statistical procedures were questioned (Goldstein 1980, 1993). Other concerns that were raised included his failure to consider the role of the curriculum (Golby, 1979; Shaw, 1979a), the small size and nature of his sample (Acton, 1980; Wragg 1979; Evans, 1982), and a reluctance to examine the motives of those involved in the schools for any of their actions (King, 1979). The major criticism was that Rutter's findings did not establish whether the differences found in children's achievement reflected the school rather than family influences (Preece, 1979; Acton, 1980; Tizard, 1980). This last criticism is largely accepted by Rutter, though he insists that it had not been his concern to look at family life.

He acknowledges that his findings do not contradict either Bernstein's view that education cannot compensate for society (Bernstein, 1970) or Jencks' findings that equalising the quality of high schools would have minimal effect on existing differences in pupils measured intellectual ability (Jencks et al, 1972). His concern was with a separate issue, namely, "whether raising the quality of education could have an impact in raising overall

standards of attainment" (Rutter et al, 1980a). He claims that the differences he finds in school levels of achievement are not explicable in terms of intake measures but, to an important extent, can be accounted for by measures in the control of the school (Rutter et al, 1980b).

The problem of the size and nature of the sample was perhaps more difficult to answer, not least because in the twelve schools scrutinised the average level of attainment in terms of examination results was poor in all of them and, it could be argued, only two could be even considered in any way to be academically effective (Acton, 1980; Purkey & Smith, 1983). Less than seven per cent of the cohort achieved five or more O-levels compared to a national average quoted by Rutter of just over ten per cent though he argues: "in view of the substantial loss of the higher IQ children, the figure ... seems fairly satisfactory" (Rutter et al, 1980a).

Despite the criticisms, which were sometimes quite virulent, Rutter's work had a profound impact. It helped other early research in this area to receive recognition and respectability. It also changed the general climate in the way schools and their effectiveness were regarded by researchers, administrators and practitioners. Perhaps, too, it can be credited with setting in motion much of the current interest and research into school effectiveness in England.

The early major studies of Reynolds and Rutter had looked at the characteristics of effective secondary schools using quite small samples: Reynolds studied eight schools, Rutter twelve. Mortimore et al (1988) used a larger sample of fifty primary schools in their study which both confirmed and extended the earlier findings in the secondary sector. The change in climate in the decade since Rutter's research was published is indicated by the relatively muted professional criticism of Mortimore's findings, but perhaps more

obviously by the response in the educational press. The headline in the Times Educational Supplement (24th March 1988), 'The Myth Exploded: Schools Really Do Matter', and the tone of the subsequent article illustrates the willingness to believe that there was firm evidence to overturn the accepted paradigm of the previous nearly twenty years that children's home backgrounds were of far greater importance than the schools they attend. It proclaimed: "the best and worst [schools] can reverse the long-established advantage of middle-class over working-class children" (Wilby, 1988).

While the Mortimore research did find evidence that in the most effective schools working class pupils scored higher than middle class pupils attending the worst schools, it also confirmed the influence of home background on absolute academic attainment. However, by drawing attention to the progress of individual children, rather than their overall level of academic attainment, Mortimore and his colleagues were able to demonstrate differential school effectiveness and identify factors which contributed to both academic and social achievement. Their findings also firmly established the idea that progress, rather than absolute attainment, was the most appropriate measure of a schools' effectiveness and led to a number of research projects and reports emphasising models which attempted to measure the 'value added' to a child's level of attainment that could be attributed to school processes (Gray et al, 1986; Audit Commission, 1991; Kennedy, 1991; Nuttall, 1991; Jesson, 1992a, 1992b; McPherson, 1992).

School Effectiveness: General or Specific?

Rutter et al (1979) argue that cognitive and affective aspects of the educative process at secondary level are mutually supportive. Their conclusion supports the earlier findings of Reynolds (1976) who reports a positive relationship between academic effectiveness and such variables as school attendance and delinquency rates. At the primary level Mortimore et al (1988) show that an academically effective school is not necessarily effective in areas

of social achievement or vice versa. Galloway et al (1985) find that poor school attendance is either not, or only weakly, associated with the structural or organisational aspects of school. They are unable to give any model which could account for differences in exclusion rates and suggest, therefore, that policies on such issues are largely idiosyncratic to each school. This phenomenon may not be confined to English schools as a study of thirty-six Dutch secondary schools draws similar conclusions (Bos et al, 1990). Consequently, although there seems to be the possibility of a direct connection between the differing spheres of schools activities, the extent and nature of any relationship between social and academic effectiveness is not yet generally agreed or demonstrated.

Differential School Effectiveness

Early studies of academic effectiveness in secondary schools suggest that schools exert a uniform influence with all their pupils (Rutter et al, 1979; Reynolds, 1982). Other more recent studies also support that view (Gray et al, 1990). On the other hand, Nuttall et al (1989) note different school effects for children of different ethnic groups and ability ranges within the same school, and other studies have found evidence of differential effects with similar types of pupils in different schools (Hedger 1992; Hedger & Raleigh, 1992; Cuttance, 1992).

Gender Differences in Patterns of Academic Achievement

There is some evidence indicating that gender may be a factor in a school's academic effectiveness. At the primary level Mortimore et al (1988) report that eight schools in their sample show reading progress is positive for boys but negative for girls. Similar variations are found in mathematical progress, though in the opposite direction. In seven of the twelve schools showing a variation from the normal pattern of equal effects on the sexes, mathematical progress is positive for girls and negative for boys. However, Mortimore regards these minor variations as an indication of the overall level of effectiveness of a

school in a particular academic area and concludes "the results suggest that the processes associated with school effectiveness are unlikely to differ for the two sexes" (p. 211).

At the secondary level, Nuttall's analysis of the 1987 Inner London Education Authority examination results of fifth year pupils (Nuttall, 1990) notes that girls tend to outperform boys in absolute levels of academic achievement. However, the performance gap was consistent across all schools with no significant differences between them. On the other hand, there is evidence showing the relative superior performance of girls at age 16 is increasing (Statistics of Education, 1994) but it reverses at age 18 where boys retain an advantage (Eccleston et al, 1990; Statistic of Education, 1994). A more recent comparison of the examination performance of boys and girls in Shropshire schools using 'value-added' criteria show some schools having equal effects on boys and girls across the ability produce range while others show marked differences (Hedger & Raleigh, 1992). Their analysis gives a comparison between the overall academic performance of boys and girls both across the county and for individual schools. They report no gender bias in levels of achievement in mathematics and science but in every other National Curriculum subject area, girls significantly out-perform boys. However, while the overall performance of girls in some in some schools is consistently higher than boys of similar ability, in others there are differences across the ability range. A convergence in levels of achievement, or in some cases a reversal of the general trend, typically occurs at the higher end of the attainment range (Hedger & Raleigh, 1992).

The most recent report from Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools confirms general superiority of girls over boys but also highlights the low academic achievement of working class boys in disadvantaged urban areas (Woodhead, 1996, paras. 46-46). Clearly, the results of such studies serve to highlight inconclusive nature of current research findings in this area.

Academic Effectiveness and Ethnicity

The levels of academic achievement by pupils of different ethnic groups have been the subject of both national concern ('Rampton Report', DES, 1981; 'Swann Report', DES, 1985) and of individual studies. The weight of evidence from the research literature suggests that different ethnic minority groups achieve significantly different levels of academic success, though at the primary level, Mortimore et al (1988) suggest that a school's academic effectiveness prevailed across any ethnic and social differences in its pupils.

Data on the examination results of pupils attending Inner London secondary schools have shown Asian pupils performing significantly above the average level while children of Bangladeshi, Caribbean and English/Scottish/Welsh/Irish parents significantly below (Mabey, 1986; Keyser, 1988; Nuttall, 1990). Drew and Gray's (1990) much larger nation-wide study of academic achievement (n = 14,429) uses the percentage of pupils obtaining 5+ 'O' level/CSE Grade 1 passes as the criterion of success. It finds that white pupils, on average, achieve the best results with twenty-one per cent being successful on the chosen criterion, closely followed by Asian pupils (nineteen per cent), with a rather larger gap to Afro-Caribbean pupils (seven per cent). They suggest the differences are probably more to do with socio-economic factors than ethnicity as such, while noting the close association between the two variables (Drew & Gray, 1990). A longitudinal study of academic attainment of three thousand pupils in twenty multi-racial schools located in four areas of England concluded that effective schools were equally effective for black and white pupils (Smith & Tomlinson, 1989). However, their study confirms the accepted view that there are large differences in the overall academic effectiveness of schools to the extent of making a difference between obtaining the good 'O' levels at one school and low CSE results at another for pupils of similar backgrounds and prior attainment. The equivalent

comparison for the current GCSE examinations might be a difference of up to three or four grades.

The main feature of the reports reviewed above is the lack of a consistent pattern in their results, particularly at the secondary level. Clearly, the debate in respect of differential academic effectiveness is not yet settled and, consequently, in the absence of general agreement it would be wise to presume that schools may not be equally effective for all their pupils. Academic effectiveness may be affected by factors such as gender, social class, or ethnicity within any one school.

Characteristics of Effective Schools

Despite the continuing debate about the precise determinants of effective schools, a range of factors are now generally identified as being common characteristics of institutions which enable their pupils to make significant academic progress (DES, 1977, 1988, 1989; Rutter et al, 1989; Purkey & Smith, 1983; Reynolds, 1985, 1992; Reid et al, 1987; Weindling, 1989; Austin & Reynolds, 1990). They can be summarised and categorised into two main groups. The first are organisational and structural factors effected through administrative action. The second group are internal school processes that help determine what can be called the school culture, ethos or climate. In some cases the distinction between the two categories are a little blurred, particularly when organisational decisions are implemented through individual action. Those factors will be examined in chapter two.

Summary

Though there is still considerable debate on certain specific issues, particularly the question about the uniformity of school effects in social matters and the extent and nature of the relationship between social and academic effectiveness, the prevailing view concerning the extent of school influence on pupil performance has changed quite radically

since the late 1960s and early 1970s. Then home background was the determining factor and schools were regarded as having minimal effect; now it is believed they can make major differences. However, the extent of that influence is still less than that of the home. Estimates of the between-school difference is generally accepted to be somewhere in the range of five to twenty per cent (Smith & Tomlinson, 1989; Nuttall et al, 1989; Gray et al, 1990; Cuttance, 1992). Clearly there are still areas of dispute, but while the exact nature and extent of the relationships between different factors has not been conclusively established, the climate of opinion has changed. Now it is generally accepted that differential school effects are real and that they can make a significant difference in the levels of academic achievement of individual pupils.

CHAPTER 2

CURRENT ORTHODOXY:

CHARACTERISTICS OF EFFECTIVE SCHOOLS

Introduction

Although the socio-economic background of the family and levels of individual intelligence are major determining factors in levels of academic achievement, it is generally accepted that the school which a particular pupil attends will also exert an independent effect. Many of the characteristic of effective schools have been identified and are generally agreed, though how such characteristics are acquired or developed is another matter. The significant factors can be grouped in two main categories; those pertaining to the management and organisation of schools and those concerned with the nature of the educational processes they adopt.

The main organisational characteristics associated with the management and administration of effective schools are:

- *Strong, knowledgeable and clear-sighted leadership. This is regarded as crucial. There is no particular leadership style that has been shown to more effective than any other. Evidence supporting a collaborative or collegiate approach is a little misleading. What seems to be the case is that the chosen style must be congruent with the prevailing culture for it to be effective. In England and the USA it seems that leadership by the headteacher needs to be focused on clear aims but also provide some means whereby teachers could be involved in the decision making processes that affect their work.*
- *Schools which emphasise academic achievement in their aims and maximise the time devoted by teachers and pupils to the task of learning tend to be more effective in developing cognitive abilities.*
- *Staff development that involves the whole school, rather than being focused on individuals, seems to help develop a common view of the school's purposes and the appropriate means to achieve them. Staff stability is also a contributory factor in this respect.*

- *While most studies agree that the delegation of some measure of control of their own destiny to the individual school is important in developing effective schools, exactly where it should come on a continuum from complete autonomy of the individual school to complete control by the local authority or district is a matter of educational and political dispute.*
- *Schools which are well looked after and cared for help create an environment in which it seems effective teaching and learning can take place. However, it is not necessary for the school to be effective, and the age or style of school building does not seem to be important.*

The process characteristics, or culture, most strongly associated with school effectiveness are as follows:

- *A clear sense of the purpose or mission of the school, agreed and accepted by staff and pupils, where the underlying values are congruent with both the stated mission and the officially agreed ways of dealing with people and doing things, seems to help create the conditions for effective learning.*
- *Discipline that is deemed to be fair by the pupils, that emphasises appropriate praise and rewards rather than punishment and is applied in a consistent manner, helps establish a sense of order and security which encourages effective pupil learning.*
- *High expectations in academic and social behaviour which are shared by staff and pupils within the school, and the use of appropriate mechanisms by teachers to enable pupils to succeed in meeting those expectations, helps create effective schools. Such academically oriented processes as matching tasks to the pupils abilities, giving regular homework, ensuring regular, clear, positive feedback to the pupils on their progress, all help create a work-orientated environment. Forms of care that are supportive of the individual and that create a sense of community also help pupils meet the social expectations of the school.*
- *Parental support for the school and involvement in their pupils learning, while not necessary for effective learning, helps establish the circumstances in which it can take place.*

There are over-arching themes connecting a number of these characteristics. To a greater or lesser degree they are important influencing factors on the characteristics of effective schools and can be broadly grouped under the three headings of school leadership, school mission or purpose and school culture.

School Leadership: The Role of the Headteacher

Virtually all the literature, both academic and that aimed at a more general audience, points to the importance of leadership as a critical factor in determining the effectiveness of a school (Austin & Reynolds, 1990; Woodhead, 1995). The general view, perhaps, can be summed up by a statement by a former Secretary of State for Education and Science, Sir Keith Joseph:

"What matters above all is the quality, character and personality of the headteacher; upon that individual man or woman depends the ethos of the school, its standards, the example set by the staff and the expectations that the staff have of the children" (Education, 3rd June 1983).

However, as King (1983) points out, taken at its face value such a view implies that if the school's success is solely equated with that of the headteacher's success, any failure must also be the head's responsibility. Clearly, achieving school effectiveness is more complicated than King implies in this statement. On the other hand, it is the case that the crucial nature of the effective leadership of the headteacher has been noted in reviews of research of educational systems in America (Purkey & Smith, 1983), in Australia (Caldwell & Spinks, 1988) and Holland (Scheerens & Creemers, 1989). The same factor has also been reported in non-western cultures such as Africa and Thailand (Harber, 1992), and across primary and secondary phases of education (Rutter et al, 1979; Mortimore et al, 1988). Even so, it is not yet clearly established whether there are universally essential qualities required in an educational leader or how leadership is effectively exercised in differing local conditions. Harber (1992) argues that concepts of management and of the effective schools are seriously deficient if they do not consider the national and cultural context in which they operate and suggests that much of the literature seems to ignore the reality of the leadership role that confronts headteachers in schools.

The literature has tended to define school leadership in terms of the tasks involved or in terms of the personality traits most likely to enable the tasks to be successfully completed. An example of the first approach can be taken from the way the Open University research into the selection of secondary headteachers, the POST project, developed a headteacher's job description after finding that personality factors rather than job-related factors dominated existing selection decisions (Morgan et al, 1983). Taking the trait approach, a list of desirable attributes can be culled, mainly from observation, of allegedly successful leaders at work. They can be divided into two main categories: those pertaining to good inter-personal relationships, and those pertaining to task achievement.

Theoretical classifications have suggested that headteachers are either transactional or transformational. Transactional headteachers are mainly involved in organising, arranging, managing and coping with the myriad of problems that can occur to ensure the continued smooth running of the school. On the other hand, transformational headteachers concentrate on working on the abstract level of beliefs, values aims and objectives in order to influence and shape the behaviour of others within the school. They are projecting a vision and committing others to it (Beare et al, 1989).

While useful in clarifying the nature of the overall task of leadership, such categorisation does not reflect research which show headteachers undertaking both aspects simultaneously (Harber, 1992; Southworth, 1993). These suggest that day-to-day transactional activities, however mundane, are the medium through which the headteacher influences and shapes the behaviour of both staff and pupils within the organisation, and establishes the image which the school projects to the outside world. Beare et al (1989) identify four aspects of the headteacher's role: making decisions and exercising authority; influencing others; initiating change and creating commitment to a shared vision. Such a view is, however, only descriptive of the differing categories of task facing a headteacher

and does explain the processes involved which might provide an insight into the determining factors of effectiveness leadership.

Those processes are, to some extent, culture bound. It is argued that, in England, the headteacher is not just the head of a school located within a particular community, but the leader of a separate social entity, unlike in the USA where schools are regarded as one manifestation of an existing community (King, 1983; Southworth, 1988). One effect of the difference in emphasis is that English headteachers tend to develop a sense of attachment to a school which Southworth says is more than a sense of placement, it is frequently a feeling of state and leads to a belief that they are not just the leader of the school but the leading exemplar for the school (Southworth, 1988, pp. 46-47). Consequently, he suggests, headteachers feel a responsibility for most if not all that happens in the school: its underlying philosophy, its values, attitudes and ways of working, all of which determines the way in which they exercise their role. This view supports the findings of Weindling & Earley (1986) who argue that it is the headteacher who is, and who is expected to be, the main agent for change and development within the school.

That headteachers should behave in such a manner is roundly condemned by some organisational theorists who tend to regard a collegial/consensual approach to organisational management as both the most desirable and most effective managerial style (Southworth, 1993; Fullan, 1992). Though collegiality may appear desirable, it does not seem to be generally adopted in practice. Weindling & Earley's study of two hundred and fifty newly appointed headteachers who took up their first headship in England and Wales during the academic year 1982-83 finds remarkable consistency in their pre-eminent influence in effecting organisational change. Following a new headteacher appointment, junior staff expect changes to be made within the school. They assume that the headteacher will make them and the vast majority feel that most of the subsequent

innovations are needed. However, despite such expectation and consensus, it seems the required alterations will not happen if the headteacher does not initiate them (Weindling & Earley, 1986). The manner in which headteachers introduce change, and the nature and sequencing of such changes, also seems to follow a common pattern. Organisational modifications are made very early in the life of the new incumbent and are frequently concerned with communication and consultation. Next come alterations to the school image and finally major curriculum changes, usually after the end of the first year (Weindling & Earley, 1986).

This description of leadership within schools seems to cross international and cultural boundaries. Austin & Reynolds (1990) report that the headteacher or principal tends to be the most important provider of leadership in the studies they surveyed in the Netherlands, Canada and Australia. More recent research of the way power is exercised in grant maintained schools in England also highlights the primacy of the headteacher in influencing, not only the initial moves towards acquiring grant maintained status, but the subsequent operation of the school once its more independent status has been achieved (Fitz et al, 1995; Halpin & Fitz, 1995).

If it is the case that headteachers are the prime agents for the development of institutions, and if it is clear what tasks they undertake in doing so, it is still not established how effective leaders work or why they choose to undertake the role. It is argued that the dynamic features of leadership are far more critical to effectiveness than the attributes of the leader. Possession of leadership attributes by a person does not necessarily ensure either followership or effectiveness since the particular circumstances of an institution may require forms of leadership that could be inappropriate or ineffective at some stages of its development (Harvanek, 1975; Murgatroyd & Gray, 1982). Similarly, Hoyle (1988) concludes that there are no essential and absolute leadership qualities, but argues that the

key to effective leadership lies in the quality of personal relationships and the skills of task achievement.

Murgatroyd and Gray (1982) stress that leadership in schools is about a particular combination of personal qualities, 'a way of being' rather than about skills, because they regard schools as being an amalgam of helping relationships in a formalised setting rather than a formal organisation. The personal qualities they regard as essential for effective helping are empathy, warmth, genuineness and what they term 'concreteness', that is, a focus on the present issue rather than looking forward or back. Such qualities, they argue, should form the basis of leadership training. They further argue that the style of leadership strongly influences that of the organisation as a whole, and that it is the overall school style that determines the way in which the constituent parts operate rather than the reverse. On the other hand, while it is clearly possible for individual teachers to manage their classrooms in ways radically different from the way the school operates, to do so is likely to create tensions within the organisation and among pupils who will be aware of any mis-match between individual and corporate approaches.

Within their general management style which determines the overall nature of interpersonal relationships, it seems headteachers use a variety of ways to achieve what they want in school (Richardson, 1973; Hall et al, 1986; Angus, 1989; Southworth, 1993). Richardson (1973), in her study of Nailsea School, clearly illustrates the complexities involved and the range of tactics used by a headteacher exercising his leadership role.

"At times he [the headteacher] would almost lecture the staff on the ways in which he felt they were falling down, though he would be careful to use the pronoun 'we' rather than 'you' thus acknowledging his own share of responsibility for the school's image in the neighbourhood. Sometimes he would offer intellectual leads, in the manner of a seminar leader, through duplicated papers on fundamental topics such as staff participation in policy making, the nature of

authority, the theoretical bases of curriculum development. Sometimes he would set out proposals, almost in the style of a government report or memorandum, on such problems as the reorganisation of courses, the setting and supervision of homework and the standardisation of assessment procedures. On some occasions he would protect people from their own feelings by avoiding staff discussion of an important event; on others he would devote a whole meeting to the exploration of attitudes and feelings about such an event. He might introduce a discussion with a careful, detailed explanation of a theme to be considered, or he might wait for others to take the initiative after only the barest of introductions..."

(Richardson, 1973, pp. 216-7).

Similarly, Southworth (1993) notes in his study of the primary sector, how effective headteachers use of a range of tactics and that their ability to exercise power in different ways makes them hard to resist. Angus (1989) argues that the shrewd leader is expected to arrange, or even manipulate, situations so that their vision becomes willingly shared by others. However, while no-one today would question the need for a headteacher to articulate clear aims and objectives for the school, it is interesting to note the Plowden Report indicated that some of the headteachers considered by HMI to be the most successful were the least able to formulate their aims clearly and convincingly (Plowden, 1967, para. 497).

Beare et al (1989) suggest that appropriate techniques for the headteacher to use in developing a climate that is receptive of their ideas can be found in anthropological literature. They argue:

There is now a rich literature on ... the ways in which corporate leaders can act positively in order to build the kind of organisation they want by taking note of the aspects of culture which, anthropologists have discovered, are the most influential in establishing cultural norms. They include subjects like values; cultural heroes; the place of saga, myths and legends; the cultural priests; rites, rituals ceremonies; cultural networks; tribal activities and patterns of social interaction; symbols, icons, and sacred sites; and so on. All of these are applicable to schools"

(Beare et al, 1989, p. 19).

If the headteacher's task and the way it is implemented seems complex, the reasons why people take on the role are equally so, with little research to provide illumination.

Southworth (1993) notes that there are no studies of headteacher motivation or research into headteacher's views about what comprises success and the circumstances required to feel job satisfaction. He suggests that their motivation lies, in part, in the wish to pursue their own educational vision and create its living reality in 'their' school. If that is so, then any attempt to impose an externally created vision would seem to be counter-productive, and a change in headteacher could imply a new vision and, therefore, in the nature of a school.

Mission and Vision

The concept of mission is a broad term used to encompass the philosophy and prime purpose of an institution. Evidence gathered from studies of schools considered to be effective points to the necessity for them to have a clear idea of their essential purpose and the means by which their central aims might be achieved (Rutter et al, 1979; Hoyle, 1988, Hill et al, 1990). As I have discussed above, it seems that the headteacher is expected to be the individual who will have the prime responsibility for formulating and articulating the school's educational philosophy and determining its specific aims (Coulson, 1980; Weindling & Earley, 1986; Sackey, 1985; Angus, 1989; Southworth, 1993). Whether that should be the case is disputed (Fullan, 1992). Nevertheless, it seems to be what actually happens in schools even when the headteacher makes exceptional efforts to do otherwise (Richardson, 1973). The effect appears to be that the educational vision of the headteacher has greater weight than that of other teachers. Given that phenomenon, a major part of any headteacher's task is to ensure, through a variety of means, that their vision is accepted and shared by others within the organisation if it is to succeed. Such a view seems to be accord with common experience of leadership in institutions ranging through industry and commerce to politics. If there is no clear purpose or sense of direction the

organisation rapidly disintegrates as a cohesive unit. Murgatroyd & Gray (1982), reporting a study of a school deemed to be failing, note that several of the indicated factors for its failure centre on the fact that staff did not understand what the headteacher was trying to do and could not determine any coherence in his actions. Such confusion can lead to apathy or potentially destructive conflict (Richardson, 1973), and was noted as a contributing factor, for example, in the eventual closure of Risinghill comprehensive school (Berg, 1968).

If it is the case that effective schools have a clearly articulated and sense of their mission, and that it is most likely that to be the headteacher's vision for the school which has formed the direction the school takes, the question arises as to the source of the headteacher's influence. Hoyle (1988) argues that, in constructing the school's mission, the headteacher has the task of selecting from two clusters of knowledge. One will be concerned with what is happening in the educational world in general; the other with the nature and expectations of the pupils, parental aspirations and other local conditions. The first will include the existing body of curricula and other educational theory from which the headteacher will make, more or less, deliberate choices. Articulation of the school mission, he suggests, will be achieved in a variety of ways. There will be statements, both written and verbal, about its nature and purpose. Symbols of all sorts will be deliberately deployed to reinforce the stated purposes of the school. Examples might include the style of dress expected of staff and pupils, the use of religious icons in church schools and the ways in which pupils' work is displayed. In a less obvious way there will be a series of possibly, but not necessarily, symbolic acts evident in the way that the headteacher and other adults deals with the mundane day-to-day tasks that arise and the people with whom they meet. These can range from the way in which teachers and pupils speak to each other, the degree of formality shown in staff meetings and the ease with which parents can speak to the headteacher to the way in which school furniture is arranged in classrooms.

While Hoyle argues that there is no particular leadership style necessary for the successful development of the school mission, he does accept that different styles would achieve it through different emphases and in different ways.

There has been some reservation about the use of the idea that a school needs an overriding mission. It has been argued that, since schools operate in a pluralistic society and, consequently, must attempt to meet a wide range of pupil needs, the necessity for a single overriding mission needs to be carefully scrutinised (Dancy, 1979). Dancy implies that schools need multiple aims rather than a particular vision. A further criticism of the concept highlights the dangers to the long-term health of an organisation of following the vision or mission of the headteacher (Fullan, 1992). He is concerned with the inhibiting effect the articulated mission might have on school improvement if it is excessively dominated by, or dependent upon, a single person. A case study by of five (USA) urban high schools engaged in major improvement projects gives support to Fullan's view of the importance of collaborative methods. The most successful were those who had no *a priori* mission statement. The staff in those schools collectively established their sense of mission and purpose as an integral part of the improvement programme (Louis & Miles, 1990, p. 206).

Fullan argues further that a charismatic principal who is committed to a particular philosophy may successfully achieving school goals in the short term because of their charisma but, in the long run, the organisation will be weak because of the over-dominating effect of such a leader. He hypothesises that such schools decline in most cases after the leader has left (Fullan, 1992). Together with other colleagues he is critical of the sense of ownership that headteachers are reported to hold and believes that a collaborative approach to management is likely to lead to more effective schools.

" 'My vision', 'my teachers', 'my school', are proprietary claims and attitudes which suggest an ownership of the school which is personal rather than collective, imposed rather than earned, and hierarchical rather than democratic. With visions as singular as this, teachers soon learn to suppress their voice. It does not get articulated. Management becomes manipulation. Collaboration becomes co-optation. Worst of all, having teachers conform to the principal's vision minimises the possibilities for principal learning. It reduces the opportunities for principals to learn that parts of their own vision may be flawed, and that some teachers' vision may be as valid or more valid than theirs"

(Fullan & Hargreaves, 1991, p. 90).

Despite the importance given in much of the research to a school's mission, the term is not without ambiguities in its use. There are two extremes. At one end is the military use of the concept with its connected ideas of high rationality, clear objectives, limited time scale for implementation and relatively clear criteria for success. At the other extreme is the religious concept having connotations of establishing and maintaining religious faith, conversion, appropriate ritual and a concern with the transcendental.

In the context of education a central position is usually taken in which the mission of the school is described as "the distinctive, or presumed-to-be distinctive, cluster of goals with associated beliefs, attitudes and activities" (Hoyle, 1988, p. 35). Such a definition includes, but is more than, the curriculum. However, as a definition it lacks any specific characteristics that could be of much use to the practitioner, which perhaps is inevitable unless there is some associated definition of the purpose of education and the function of schools. In a pluralist and multi-cultural society such agreement is not always possible. Hoyle tacitly accepts this problem when he argues that, compared to a state school, it is easier for an independent institution to establish a distinctive mission precisely because the headteacher faces fewer externally imposed constraints in meeting parental demands and because the parents know what they are purchasing for their children. Consequently, there is likely to be greater congruence between the mission of the successful independent school and the expectation of parents who send their children to it (Hoyle, 1988).

Swift (1968) has argued that the influence of factors such as the family structure and religious up-bringing of children, as well as the local community and peer group in which they find themselves, are important cultural experiences which help form pupils before they go to school. They will have a significant influence on the way children adapt to school life and institutional learning. It is for this reason that I want to argue that, in analysing the effectiveness of a school, the concept of its 'mission' has to be connected to that of its 'culture'.

The concepts of both mission and culture in relation to schools require the articulation of an overarching understanding of the nature of those being educated. Different views of the fundamental nature of children will determine the purpose of the school. Effective schools are likely to be those where the mission and culture of the school are in harmony with each other and are compatible with the cultural background and aspirations of parents and pupils. Beare et al (1989) advise headteachers seeking school improvement:

"There is some vision about education, a set of core assumptions, which drive your whole professional life forward ... When a group of people share the same world view, when their paradigms are consistent with each other or are sufficiently homogeneous in their core assumptions, then a common 'culture' emerges. That group of people begin to manifest parallel behaviours, similar speech patterns, common ways of explaining their particular universe; in short the group becomes tribal. The principal must address those elements ... which will give clues for action and planning ... The best principals embody a paradigm that is consistent with their school" (Beare et al, 1989. pp. 18-19).

Though the quality of leadership is crucial in the development of a consistent and coherent vision of the way in which the underlying purpose or mission of the school should be realised, the culture of an effective school will be mainly expressed on a day-to-day basis through actions and attitudes of individual teachers and the curriculum they impart to the pupils in their care.

School Culture

While it is now generally accepted that there are differences between the effectiveness of schools, there is less agreement as to the principal causes. Agreement about some of the characteristics of effective schools, outlined above, does not explain how it is that some schools can develop them and others seem less able to do so.

After Rutter and his colleagues published their findings in 1979, emphasis focused upon the specific characteristics found to be associated with the successful schools in their sample. Less emphasis was placed on what may have caused the schools to develop such different styles, some successful others not, although they were ostensibly set up to undertake essentially the same task with children from similar geographical areas. Although their study was concerned with correlation and did not attempt to identify causality, it did suggest possible reasons that might lie in the features of schools considered as social systems. They identified an amalgam of values, attitudes and behaviours for which they used the term 'ethos'. Factors that might create a positive ethos included the history of the school, its expressed philosophy and chosen ways of working, shared activities between pupils and teachers toward an agreed common good which required them to work together so reducing potential conflict between them, and a variety of other variables outside the control of the school such as an academically balanced intake (Rutter et al, 1979).

Commenting later on this research in which she took part, Ouston indicated that the particular items associated with successful schools in their sample were merely indicators of the school's particular emphasis and were considered typical of the school's style of interaction with its pupils. They were regarded as being both causes and consequences of the particular school's climate and it was recognised that schools in different circumstances might realise similar aims in quite different ways (Ouston, 1981).

The concept of ethos is complex. Rutter and his team used it in the sense of 'what actually happens' in schools which may arise quite spontaneously and become habitual. There are other views. Ethos can be seen in terms of implementing the standards of traditional authority, for example of a Church, or a Marxist state. Such an ethos has been termed 'custodial' (Hogan, 1984). While it might still be made manifest in similar ways to Rutter's concept, its purpose is to defend certain existing attitudes and understandings and, therefore, will feature a constant watchfulness for infringements of accepted norms. An alternative ethos might be seen in institutions attempting to hold in unity inherently different or opposing interest groups. In circumstances where a sense of shared identity and common purpose does not exist, Hogan suggests a form of 'accommodating' ethos might develop where expediency and compromise are the most important elements in the daily life of those responsible for ensuring the organisation continues to function.

While the notion of ethos articulated by the Rutter team has been accepted as an important element in the debate, the concept is wide-ranging. One measure of its acceptance and breadth can be seen in the proliferation of similar terminology used within the effective schools literature, such as 'climate', 'atmosphere', 'tone' and 'culture'. All such terms seem to have acquired the connotation of desirability. However, they do not necessarily mean the same thing nor are they automatically useful. As Dancy (1979) points out, the concept of ethos is morally neutral and the degree to which it is discernible has no obvious educative value. Such a place as Auschwitz had a very clear and coherent ethos that may have been appropriate to its purpose and so contributed to its effectiveness, but it would not be regarded as an appropriate model for a school in a liberal democracy.

Even so, it is generally accepted that individual schools have their own atmosphere or climate, and that a 'good' climate is necessary pre-requisite for a 'good' school. Such views are voiced in popular books advising parents on choosing a school for their child (Ducker

et al, 1983), in school guides (Clark & Round, 1991), and in government surveys and reports ('Secondary Schools: An Appraisal', HMI, 1988; 'Discipline in Schools', DES, 1989). Academics argue that it is too important a concept for researchers to ignore (Strivens, 1985) and that it needs to be a focus for school reform and improvement (Reynolds & Sullivan, 1981). However, despite such a level of agreement, the use of the concept in research projects brings with it enormous methodological difficulties.

Reviews of research in this area, both in England (Strivens, 1985) and the USA (Anderson, 1982), identify the major problems facing researchers. These include:

- *Obtaining objective and verifiable agreement as to the nature of any observed atmosphere or climate. A 'good' climate for one observer may be 'bad' for another, regardless of its effectiveness in achieving specific goals.*
- *The effects of school climate on the social-emotional and moral development of pupils are notoriously difficult to assess objectively.*
- *Whether a school's atmosphere has any objective existence irrespective of the perceptions of those involved, and even if it does whether it can be measured.*

Anderson (1982) highlights the difficulties involved in her analysis of the debates concerning:

- *the most appropriate theoretical basis for research.*
- *the choice of variables.*
- *the conceptualisation of the mechanisms or model of the relationship between climate and outcomes.*
- *the validity of using subjective perceptions as measure of a hypothesised objective reality.*

In a similar fashion, Evans (1982) warns of the dangers inherent in using a concept that can be readily understood in different ways and suggests the following questions be raised about its measurement:

- *What are its different components?*
- *How well do the different components correlate?*
- *What weightings, if any, should be given to the various components?*

- *Would different weightings affect the conclusions that could be drawn?*

Some researchers have viewed the concept of school ethos in a similar way to Rutter, in as much as they link it with a range of mechanisms or organisational characteristics in the effective schools that they have studied (Reynolds, 1982). Others have argued that it is more concerned with the way in which people deal with each other and the values which underpin the interpersonal relationships within the organisation (Bacon, 1979; Brookover et al, 1979; Evans, 1982; Murgatroyd & Gray, 1982). To some extent this is an artificial distinction, since decisions concerning methods of organising people can only be based on a view of the nature of human social activity, whether consciously held or not.

Most of the research in this area has been conducted in the USA where, despite the difficulties outlined above, there is some consensus about the variables that may be involved, but very little agreement as to the way in which they operate or whether they are the result or the cause of the desirable school effects with which they are associated. In her exhaustive review of over two hundred studies, Anderson (1982) identifies those variables which are perceived, by either participants or outsiders, to be part of school climate and that keep recurring in association with positive outcomes regardless of the quality of the research. She groups them into four categories: ecology variables, milieu, social system variables and culture variables. Of these, it is only the culture variables, which she describes as "the value and belief systems of various groups within a school", that are regarded as having a definite relationship with student outcomes. However, she notes the lack of any understanding of how they interact with other variables (p. 402). In each of the other three categories the findings are described as "having low or inconsistent relationships with student outcomes" (ecology variables), "often divergent" (milieu) and "conflicting" (social systems variables) (pp. 308 - 404).

In contrast to the USA, there has been little empirical research in England in this field. Examples of studies which have been conducted have used questionnaires derived from the early work of Halpin and Croft in the USA (Findlayson, 1973), case studies (Hargreaves, 1967; Lacey, 1970; Ball, 1981) or a combination of both approaches (King, 1973). All approaches have their own methodological difficulties. Findlayson (1973) emphasises the problems of objectivity in using data collected in questionnaires about school climate. He argues that value judgements would inevitably be made of such characteristics as "a high degree of perceived social control on the part of teachers or a low degree of perceived openness on the part of the head" (p. 35), especially when the empirical evidence was not available to determine the effectiveness of the particular school climate that his scales indicated. The same concerns about objectivity apply with data collected through case studies. Strivens (1985) makes very similar observations, arguing that though there is general agreement that educational environments are important and have significant differential effects, researchers have been unable to specifying with certainty which are particularly favourable or how they are created.

Murgatroyd & Gray (1982) point to evidence which suggests that the strength of a individual's self concept and internal focus of control is crucial for the pupil's academic achievement. Their development is a function of the quality of personal relationships with their teachers and peers. Consequently, they argue, desirable characteristics in the pupils' self image cannot be taught in the same way as physical skills or techniques might be but are a response to appropriate personal qualities in their teachers such as empathy, warmth, genuineness and concreteness. They apply the same concept in their analysis of the key features of effective leadership, particularly headship, but also at other levels of authority and leadership within a school. Brookover et al (1979) argue the case a little more strongly suggesting:

"the cultural or social-psychological normative climate and the student status-role definitions which characterise the school social system explain much of the variance in achievement and behavioural outcomes of the school"

(Brookover et al, 1979, pp. 135-136).

In more simple terms, they claim that the most significant determining factor in pupils academic achievement is that teachers hold high expectations for their pupils and, perhaps more importantly, accept the responsibility for seeing that their pupils' academic potential becomes a reality. They conclude that the evidence from their study of ninety-one elementary schools in one state in the USA:

"clearly indicates that schools can produce whatever behaviour the school social system is designed to produce ... [and that] the school social system is no different from the family or other social organisations in that children learn to behave in the ways that the social system defines as appropriate and proper for them"

(Brookover et al, 1979, p. 148)

Such observations, however, beg the question of the motivations of those in authority within the school which, in part, determine the ways in which teachers interact with pupils, their parents and colleagues.

Support for the idea of developing a culture appropriate for improving levels of school achievement has widespread support in the USA (Clark et al, 1984; Weindling, 1989; Fullan, 1991). In England less use has been made of strategies for school improvement (Reynolds & Sullivan, 1981). However, there is evidence suggesting that their underlying principles are gaining acceptance. Schools are attempting to generate positive values and attitudes as a route to academic success and recognising that it is through a complicated web of personal relationships that their school's effectiveness or ineffectiveness will be sustained (Reynolds & Packer, 1992). However, such approaches have two major difficulties. The first is the problem of evaluating the specific processes that are involved.

The second lies in the application of the knowledge researchers have gained about the characteristics of an effective school. As Reynolds (1991) says, we now know what makes a good school but, unfortunately we do not yet know *how* to make schools good. To illustrate his point he describes how the staff culture and belief system in a school which had requested the help of a consultancy group in their quest for self improvement made it possible for teachers to reject the adoption or implementation of the practices that were suggested to them by the existing evidence about school effectiveness (Reynolds, 1991).

The multiplicity of terms tends to confuse the issue. 'Atmosphere' is too vague; 'climate' lacks objectivity and Rutter's 'ethos', while identifying certain comprising elements, does not explain the processes involved. On the other hand, the notion of 'culture', derived from anthropology, provides an opportunity to understand the influence of the social interaction that takes place within organisations such as schools. Handy (1976; 1988) defines culture, when applied to organisations, as the total of the inherited ideas, beliefs, values and knowledge which constitute the shared basis of social action. Beare et al (1989), noting the importance of a corporate culture in schools acknowledged to be 'the best', extend the notion slightly to include a shared world view (p.18). However, the concepts developed by organisational theory portraying school as orderly and rational systems based on shared goals may be inadequate.

It has been suggested that schools are essentially anarchic organisations with loosely coupled and fluid groups of individuals (Weick, 1976; Strivens, 1985). In recognising the particularly complex nature of schools as organisations, Handy (1988) notes the description given by Matthew & Tong (1982) of the constant interlinking and shifting autonomy of individual teachers with the collective action of departments and school wide activities that form the day to day activities of secondary school. They refer to them as a series of 'interrelated independence's' and Handy suggests that what may be happening is

that a variety of individual cultures are co-existing within the overall school culture (Handy, 1988). He also suggests that schools are to some degree different from all other institutions, indicating that traditional paradigms for organisational analysis may require modification (Handy & Aitken, 1990). Others go further, arguing that schools are much more complex than many of the systems and organisation theorists suggest. Ball argues that organisational analyses tend to obscure rather than illuminate the realities and that they have little of any significance to tell us about the way in which schools run on a day to day basis (Ball, 1987). Such views are supported by Greenfield who argues "above all, organisations are patterns of living, ways of seeing the world ... the meanings we find in our lives (Greenfield, 1993a, p. 54) and that children "do not learn from 'environments', resources or from 'characteristics of teachers' [but] from their specific involvement with people, things and events around them (Greenfield, 1993b, p. 21).

This phenomenological approach to understanding organisations, advocated by Greenfield and others, is in contrast to the scientific management and human relation view that emphasises particular ideal-type organisations. It echoes the suggestions of Reynolds and Packer (1992) for school improvement programmes outlined above. In addition, it gains credence from descriptions in ethnographic studies which present images of schools as being much less tightly organised and structured than traditional organisation theory suggests.

Contingency theory is another development in the understanding of organisations. This emphasises consideration of the context in which organisations operate. The effective organisation is one that fits its contextual conditions. While this approach clearly recognises the complexity of the processes that exist within organisations, it creates problems for research precisely because of the attention paid to the additional interactions that take place between the organisation and its external context.

Consequently, while the concept of a school culture conducive to academic effectiveness seems to offer an appropriate paradigm for my research, there are some drawbacks. Major problems include defining a somewhat nebulous concept, the difficulty in identifying valid independent organisational variables (Scheerens & Creemers, 1989) and also the extent to which any findings from one sample can be generalised to other institutions whose external circumstances may be very different. However, despite ambiguities in the concept of school culture and difficulties with the methodology involved in adequately measuring its precise effects on levels of academic achievement and behaviour, it seems that it is an essential element in understanding what schools are trying to do and the processes by which they attempt to achieve their aims.

The extent to which the concept can be utilised in respect of Catholic schools will be discussed further in chapter 4. Whether there is one best culture is open to question. It is argued that it can vary from school to school and still be both academically effective and at the same time achieve other school aims (Purkey & Smith, 1983). What may be important is not the particular culture, but the degree of congruence that exists between the educative-cultural expectations and understanding of the major stake-holders in the educational enterprise. In other words, the level of agreement about the mission of the school and the degree to which the curriculum and pedagogical approach is consistent with its accepted purpose.

Curriculum Content and School Effectiveness

Before the implementation of the National Curriculum individual teachers had considerable freedom in matters of curriculum content. At the secondary level, teachers determined the subjects in which pupils were examined and the examination board for which they were entered. There has been little attention paid to the effects of curriculum choice on the progress of individual pupils. Indeed this omission was the source of some

of the criticism of Rutter's work, particularly as it has long been held by teachers that achievement can be effected by the choice of examinations and examination board.

While the issue is not as clear cut as anecdotal evidence suggests, differences have been found indicating that such choices can effect achievement levels measured by examinations. This may distort the apparent relative effectiveness of a school in particular subjects (Hedger, 1992). However, examination boards make strenuous efforts to achieve comparability, and while it may be easier for an individual pupil to achieve high grades in some subjects than others, those differences tend to be small, not necessarily consistent over a period of time, and can be explained by factors other than a lack of subject or examination board comparability (Nuttall et al, 1974; Bardell et al, 1978; Forrest et al 1982).

Pedagogical Policy and Practice of Teachers

The planned strategies and policies of schools are mediated through teachers, their teaching style, personality, choice of material and organisational methods. While it is readily accepted that individual teachers have an influence on a pupil's behaviour and academic achievement, research evidence linking particular school outcomes with a specific teacher's style or personality has not been clearly established.

Control and Disruption in School

Within a system of compulsory education the implicit element of coercion places a premium on teachers' ability to control large numbers of pupils before any formal teaching or learning can take place (Waller, 1932; Hirst & Peters, 1970). Consequently, there has been considerable interest in pupil-teacher relationships and its effects. Research in the USA suggests teachers experience antipathy towards their pupils to the degree that they

fail to exhibit in reality the qualities of the image of the ideal pupil which the teacher holds (Becker, 1952). In a study of delinquent street gangs in San Francisco, Werthman (1963) notes that it is only in particular classes and with particular teachers that incidents occur which lead pupils into serious conflict with authority and, sometimes, their suspension from school. He suggests that it is more than just a clash between teacher middle-class values and the lower-class gang culture. Rather, he argues, when otherwise difficult pupils are convinced:

"the educational enterprise and its ground rules are being legitimately pursued, that a teacher is really interested in teaching them something, and their efforts to learn will be rewarded (by the teacher given grades), they consistently show up on time, leave when the class is dismissed, raise their hands before speaking, and stay silent and awake"
(Werthman, 1963, p. 59).

In a review of the causes of disruptive behaviour by pupils in school in England, Steed (1985) shows that schools vary in their ability to overcome the negative and destructive attitudes that some pupils bring into school. He claims that teachers can and do have an independent effect irrespective of pupil background and social class. However, Steed concludes that in the process that leads to school disruption it is not possible to determine conclusively where the prime cause lies, with the school or the pupil.

In a study of existing pupil attitudes within schools rather than their causes, Findlayson & Loughran (1976) note significant differences in the perceptions of pupils attending schools having high and low levels of delinquency, both in their levels of satisfaction and in the way they were treated by teachers. Galloway (1981) suggests it is possible to determine the cause, and argues that attempts to produce favourable attitudes towards school in pupils need to be concentrated on teachers because creating a school climate which inhibits problem behaviour depends less on the form of organisation than on the way it was implemented. Disruptive behaviour that is most troublesome to secondary school

teachers appears to be relatively minor in character but persistent, mainly 'talking out of turn' and 'hindering other pupils' (Houghton et al, 1988; 'Elton Report', DES, 1989). Such forms of disruption, it is argued, are within the control of the teacher. By using techniques to enhance a positive self-image in their pupils, and by expressing their approval of them, teachers greatly reduce incidents of disruptive behaviour and increase the time spent productively on the set tasks.

Techniques that improve teacher effectiveness include ensuring acceptable behaviour is publicly and privately praised, reprimanding quietly and privately, varying classroom seating to suit the specific task and using a limited set of positively-phrased classroom rules (Wheldall & Merrett, 1984). The suggestion that an emphasis on reward rather than punishment is a positive factor in pupils achievement reinforces the findings of Rutter et al (1979). However, praise in itself does not necessarily produce a positive response from pupils. Askew and William (1995) report evidence suggesting that teachers regarded as more effective than average use less praise than less successful colleagues. Brophy (1981) reports that for praise to have beneficial effects it should be contingent upon some particular thing that the pupil has done, should be specific and must seem to the pupil to be both sincere and credible.

Teaching Styles, Self Esteem and Effective Learning

It is generally accepted that an individual's self image will influence their behaviour. Studies of pupils in the early and middle years of schooling conclude that teachers' attitudes have a significant influence on the way pupils feel about themselves, which in turn affects levels of academic and behavioural difficulties (Staines, 1958; Murgatroyd & Gray, 1982; Atherley, 1990). These findings are similar to the views of Purkey (1970) and results of the extensive research of Brookover et al (1978) in the USA. Brookover and his colleagues identified a factor which they term 'student sense of academic futility' as

explaining the largest difference in levels of achievement and which, they argue, is within the power of individual schools to control.

The effects of teaching style on pupil achievement has been hotly debated. Early experimental work in America (Lewin, Lippitt & White, 1939) suggests that the leadership style of teachers can have significant effects on student outcomes. However, this research used very small groups in situations that are far removed from normal academic classroom learning. In England, the debate over the relative effectiveness of 'traditional' versus 'progressive' teaching methods initiated by Bennett (1976) has not been satisfactorily resolved, not least because of the difficulty of identifying a pure teaching style. The difficulties are clearly illustrated in a subsequent re-analysis of the data which reverse Bennett's original findings (Aitken, Bennett & Hesketh, 1981). Wragg (1979) suggests that the negative findings of the effectiveness of 'informal' or 'progressive' teaching methods both in England and the USA have more to do with the difficulty teachers find in using such approaches rather than any defect inherent in the techniques themselves.

A review of both short and long-term studies of teacher effectiveness by Shavelson & Russo (1977) discusses the great difficulty of finding a generalised measure of teacher ability. They note that effectiveness in teaching and learning may depend upon more upon the (fortuitous) degree of match between particular groups of pupils and their teachers rather than a specific skill or trait (p.174). On the other hand, Reid et al (1987), in their review of the literature, argue that there is only one clear conclusion to be drawn:

"So long as teachers know what they are doing and why, and their teaching styles correspond with their aims and objectives, then the likely effectiveness of their teaching is enhanced. When staff do not have clear aims and objectives, but instead muddle through the curriculum, the likelihood of ineffective outcomes is considerably increased"
(Reid et al, 1987, p.30).

However, it is important to recognise that individual teachers will be influenced by, (as well as exert an influence upon), the overall school environment, and that it is only when the school as a whole functions in such a way as to promote effective learning can specific actions by individual teachers have much probability of succeeding (Hirst & Peters, 1970; Purkey & Smith, 1983). The impact of a single individual on the totality of school effects is likely to be very limited if they are in opposition.

Teacher Personality and Expectations

Personality factors of teachers have not received a great deal of attention from researchers concerned with school effectiveness. In an early review of research in the USA, Rossi (1961) reports that the specific teacher contribution to student achievement, in the short run, is minimal when compared to other factors. Though their influence may be minimal, he feels able to conclude that teachers do contribute to their students achievements to some extent, though their ability to do so does not arise directly from their social background, training, sex or marital status. Similar views are reported in England by Goodacre (1968) in a survey of the effect of teacher attitudes on the progress of pupils learning to read. He notes that teachers have different attitudes towards, what they regard as, the characteristics of educationally supportive homes, depending upon the social class of the area that the school served and suggested that it may have an effect pupil attainment. However, he also notes the headteacher's personality does not appear to be related to the school's academic standards, or to pupils reading achievement. On the other hand, the headteacher's attitudes towards the pupils and their home background is a crucial factor in overcoming the prevailing expectations among teachers of low pupil achievement being associated with poor home background.

While there is no general agreement as to the effects of any particular teacher personality or teaching style, the beneficial influence of high parent, teacher and pupil expectations is

well documented both in England and the USA (Douglas, 1964; Goodacre, 1968; Rutter et al, 1979; Brookover et al, 1979; Cuttance, 1980; Mortimore et al, 1988). In addition, the reported results of experimental research established the concept of the self-fulfilling prophecy of teacher expectation on pupil progress and performance (Rosenthal & Jacobson, 1968). While the methodological basis of the experimental work was questioned, and attempts at replication produced largely negative results, the principle has been generally accepted, especially when supported by studies of naturally occurring teacher expectation (Rutter, 1978). However, the point has been made that, for those expectations to become pupil achievements, teachers also need to accept the professional responsibility of making it happen (Brookover et al, 1979).

Though it is generally agreed that high levels of expectation is an important factor in the level of academic achievement, it is not a straight forward relationship and, particularly in the case of the perceived under-achievement of some ethnic minority groups, may not be a major determinate in examination success. However, it is often assumed to be a prime cause. For example, commenting on the differential performance in the 1987 examinations of ethnic groups found by the Inner London Education Authority, David Mallen, one of its education officers, suggests that the reason for differences in performance between Asian and Caribbean pupils might be that teachers have stereotyped views of them. He is quoted as saying:

"Asian children (the best performing group) are considered thoughtful, hardworking and capable, the sort of qualities not associated with Caribbean children (Hackett, 1990).

Although low teacher expectation may be a factor in low levels of pupil achievement, the case that teachers generally hold low academic expectations for Caribbean children is not proven. While such views are often assumed to be widespread among teachers (Rampton

Report', DES, 1981), there is some research suggesting teachers generally have neither low expectations nor convey a negative image to their Caribbean pupils (Short, 1985).

Summary

This chapter has considered what can be learned in general about school effectiveness as it relates to the academic achievement of its pupils. The balance of research findings in the UK suggests that academic successful schools are primarily associated with the following factors:

- *Purposeful leadership of the headteacher with a clear sense of 'mission'*
- *A disciplined work orientated environment*
- *A climate of positive expectations for pupil achievement*
- *Good interpersonal relations between staff and pupils*
- *A coherent school culture in which the values, attitudes and behavioural characteristic are consistent*
- *Positive parental involvement and support of the school*

Research in the USA, in addition, suggests that high levels of school autonomy is also an important factor though the evidence is disputed. The next chapter will review the existing literature specifically concerned with Catholic schools and their effectiveness. Together, the first three chapters provide the background to the quantitative study of the effectiveness of schools in one shire county which forms the bulk of chapter 4.

CHAPTER 3

BY THEIR FRUITS YOU WILL KNOW THEM: THE EFFECTIVENESS AND OUTCOMES OF CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

Introduction

In chapters 1 and 2 I reflected on the importance of considering the performance of schools in the light of their intended purpose and noted that cultural differences may influence the approach to their educational task. In respect of Catholic education that notion is specifically recognised by Hornsby-Smith who, as part of a defence of Catholic schools in England, argues:

"the evaluation of Catholic schools is concerned with their effectiveness not only as institutions for the learning of skills and dispositions required by the wider society but also with their effectiveness as agencies of socialisation to the distinctive features of the Catholic subculture" (Hornsby-Smith, 1972, p. 299).

This suggests that it is necessary to consider the academic effectiveness of Catholic schools as part of their overall mission and culture rather than treating it as an isolated factor.

Hyde (1990) notes that, while all those involved in church schools are convinced of their academic and socialising effectiveness, there is little empirical evidence to justify their beliefs nor, on the other hand, to give support to their many detractors. In the absence of any directly relevant and large scale empirical research in this country, the only existing data come from a body of smaller studies that date back to the mid-1950s and 1960s. These studies reflect the general interest of sociologists working in the field of education at the time and are mainly concerned with issues of social class and group inequalities. The more recent research has considered the religious impact of Catholic schools on their

present and former pupils. Even so there is almost no empirical research concerned with their academic effectiveness and that which does exist arises from studies whose prime focus is other than denominational education. Conversely, in the USA there is a great deal of research focused on denominational education, the majority of which has centred on the levels of pupil's academic achievement.

School Effects and Religious Attitudes

In England, one early study of the religious effects of Catholic schools was the conducted in Liverpool (Brothers, 1964). Using intensive interviews with priests, teachers and pupils Brothers investigated ways in which the developing grammar schools of that period, and the changing culture that they brought to an essentially working class environment, affected the religious community in which the pupils had been reared. Before the introduction of grammar schools the parish structure had exerted great influence with all generations within the Catholic community. Her results indicate that, for many of the young people, the parish had limited importance to them and in some cases became irrelevant.

Such findings do not necessarily imply that pupils become less religious as a result of their changing social status. On the contrary, Lawlor (1965) finds evidence of a deep religious commitment among Catholic pupils and students, but notes that it manifests itself in an individualistic way with a tendency towards private or personal religion and a withdrawal from the immediate material attractions of the secular world.

During the 1960s, the more questioning spirit of that age affected the Catholic church as much, if not more, than other established public institutions. The decrease in deference towards authority figures that was evident in general society affected the Catholic population also. Within Catholic circles the additional influence of the theology of the

Second Vatican Council (Vatican II) produced a climate in which many of the accepted assumptions about the purpose and effectiveness of Catholic schools were questioned (Jebb, 1968; Tucker 1968; Spencer, 1967, 1971; Callaghan & Cockett, 1975). Spencer is highly critical of Catholic schools. A survey he carried out in 1958, finds that seventy-five per cent of former pupils who had attended Catholic schools and seventy-four per cent who had not attended Catholic schools but received instruction outside school hours claim to go to Mass each Sunday. A similar survey, made ten years later, shows that only forty per cent of British-born Catholics who attended Catholic schools practise their faith, and only twenty-five who had not attended Catholic schools did so. Spencer suggests that the decline in weekly Mass attendance over the period can be attributed to the ineffectiveness of Catholic schools as agents of Catholic socialisation (Spencer, 1971).

Hornsby-Smith (1972) identified a number of concerns voiced about Catholic schools at that time. They included the suggestions that they were "too costly, socially divisive and anti-ecumenical, intellectually inferior, authoritarian, over-protective and singularly ineffective in their aims of producing practising, knowledgeable and committed Catholics" (p. 298). He responds to these criticisms by pointing to the importance of family life as the major factor in successful religious socialisation and the part played by the Catholic school in minimising what he sees as the conflict of culture that exists between the religious life and an increasingly secular and pluralistic world. Consequently, his interpretation of the patterns for Mass attendance quoted by Spencer is much more positive. Given the general changes in society, he feels able to conclude his defence by highlighting the popularity of Catholic education, arguing:

"There are clear signs that spokesmen for other religious communities, fearful of a pervasive secular materialism in our society and the limitations of non-sectarian Christian formation in the local authority schools, are more sympathetic to the traditional Catholic defence of denominational schools"
(Hornsby-Smith, 1972, p. 300).

In later years, and in his book, Catholic Education: The Unobtrusive Partner (1978), Hornsby-Smith reports the results of a series of small scale exploratory studies completed under his direction at the University of Surrey in the mid-1970s. In contrast to the doubts about the effectiveness of the religious formation provided by Catholic schools expressed by critics, he suggests that the cumulative findings of the research by Thomas (1972), Hornsby-Smith & Petit (1973) and Fitzpatrick (1974) show them to have a greater influence on the religious and moral socialisation of pupils in terms of an agreement with, or an acceptance of, statements of Christian belief and action than other types of secondary schools. However, despite being more effective, in absolute terms, Catholic schools are not particularly successful in achieving high levels of adherence to the values they espouse. Thus, Fitzpatrick (1974) notes signs of adolescent rebellion or rejection of Catholicism and a lack of understanding of the Catholic church as an institution within her small sample of fourth form pupils (n = 48) in two London Catholic comprehensive schools. Hornsby Smith, on the other hand, argues that the relatively weak long-term effectiveness of the socialisation process of Catholic schools should not be regarded as a failure of the schools but that "their influence wears off in a hostile or non-supportive adult environment" (Hornsby-Smith, 1978, p. 46).

More recent research in England compares the effectiveness of Catholic, Church of England and non-denominational primary schools in promoting positive attitudes towards Christianity (Francis, 1979; 1984; 1986a). Using his own Francis Scale of Attitude Towards Christianity, and taking into account background factors, Francis conducted a series of replicated surveys in 1974, 1978 and 1982 in thirty schools in the south-east of England. His findings lead him to conclude that, pupils educated in Roman Catholic schools tend to record a more favourable attitude towards Christianity than pupils of comparable sex, age, IQ, socio-economic background and religious behaviour with similar levels of parental church attendance, who are educated in county schools. He further notes

that pupils educated in Church of England schools tend to record a less favourable attitude towards Christianity than pupils educated in county schools (Francis, 1986a). He argues that the more favourable attitude is the result of the interaction between the Catholic school environment and the home background.

He conducted similar research with over three thousand pupils aged between twelve and eighteen years in five Roman Catholic state maintained comprehensive schools in two Midland conurbations. His findings show that the mean attitude scores for both boys and girls are consistently higher than those of pupils in comparable non-denominational maintained schools. However, they also show a consistent pattern of decline in the mean attitude scores as pupils progress through school, with girls having a more positive attitude at all stages (Francis, 1987). In another survey using the same instrument, Francis finds that, within Catholic schools, non-Catholic pupils tend to show a less favourable attitude to Christianity than Catholic pupils, highlighting the probable mutually supportive and reinforcing effects of home and school (Francis, 1986b).

The pattern of Francis' 1987 research findings in England was confirmed in Scotland by Gibson (1989) and Gibson and Francis (1989). However, Gibson's research, based in non-denominational schools in the Dundee area, shows that the mean attitude scores of pupils aged between eleven and fifteen are considerably lower than those reported by Francis for pupils of similar age in Roman Catholic schools in England. Gibson and Francis' study in Catholic schools in Dundee also finds that pupils have lower mean attitude scores than their English counterparts (Gibson & Francis, 1989). While the results may indicate a less positive response by school pupils in Scotland to Christianity, it is perhaps unwise to generalise from a sample of schools from only one area of the country, especially as the results are, to some extent, contrary to the findings of Rhymer's research in the Strathclyde region which uses a slightly modified version of the Francis Scale of Attitude Towards

Christianity. Rhymer found no significant difference between the religious attitudes of Catholic pupils educated in Catholic schools and those Catholic pupils educated in non-denominational schools but receiving some Catholic education outside normal school hours. However, the attitude scores of Catholic pupils in non-denominational schools and receiving no additional Catholic education are significantly lower than the other two groups (Rhymer & Francis, 1985).

A similar pattern is found in Northern Ireland. Greer (1981), for instance, reports that in his sample of just over two thousand Belfast pupils aged between eight and sixteen, Catholics have a more positive attitude towards Christianity than Protestants, with girls in both groups more positive than boys. A more recent study of the attitudes of nine hundred and thirty-nine pupils aged between eleven and sixteen in five Catholic secondary schools in Northern Ireland again finds a consistent decline in attitude scores throughout the five years with girls more positive than boys at all stages. The mean scores from his sample suggest that there is a more positive overall response to Christianity in Catholic maintained secondary schools in Ireland than in England or Scotland (Greer & Francis, 1991). This is likely to be a reflection of a greater influence of religion in all aspects of life in Ireland compared to the more secular societies in England and Scotland

Research in the USA in the 1960s by Greeley and Rossi focuses on the effectiveness of the American Catholic school system as a whole and investigates the impact of the religious education it provides. In particular, they consider the effect of schools in Catholic socialisation, whether they are a divisive influence in American society, the relative success of former pupils in the secular world and the perceptions of the Catholic school system held by the Catholic community (Greeley & Rossi, 1966). In comparison to the conclusions of Hornsby-Smith on the effectiveness of schools in promoting Catholic socialisation, they find a small but significant association between a Catholic education and

adult religious behaviour that holds true across a wide range of demographic and socio-economic and religious variables. In addition, but perhaps expectedly, they find evidence of what they term a 'multiplier effect', indicating that the effects of Catholic schools are greater on those who came from practising Catholic homes, a finding supported by the later work in England of Francis (Francis, 1979; 1986b).

In his extensive review of research into the religious influence of schools, Hyde (1990) reaches a number of general but firm conclusions, despite his concern that much of the relatively small body of research he draws upon is methodologically flawed (pp. 293 - 294). Citing what he regards as the key studies of Leavey (1972a; 1972b), he argues:

"The cumulative effect of these studies in the United States, the United Kingdom, and Australia shows that, while parents have the strongest influence on their children's religiousness, the school also has an independent influence which arises from the school climate. It is not the result of formal education but is due to the attitudes that are fostered and the effectiveness of pastoral care"
(Hyde, 1990, p. 333).

He also notes the consistent reports from studies in Britain, the USA and Australia showing greater levels of religious behaviour by school pupils claiming adherence to Catholicism than pupils of other denominations or religions (Hyde, 1990, p. 310). While these do not prove the existence of an independent school factor, Hyde argues that, together with studies by Flynn (1974; 1985) and Fahy (1982), Leavey's work makes the existence of an independent school effect on the religiousness of pupils highly probable (Hyde, 1990, p. 330).

Leavey notes that, in order that schools achieve any independent effect, they must ensure their students experience the school as a living Christian environment in which the everyday procedures reinforce the Christian ideal. Consequently, she finds the school climate to be of greater importance than individual classroom climate. Flynn's findings

confirm the importance of the overall school atmosphere. They also point to the influence of the headteacher, school organisation and administration, and the values promoted by the school through the things it prizes and rewards as being causal factors in developing pupil's religiousness (Flynn, 1974; 1985). In addition, school also appears to be an independent influencing factor for pupils considering a religious vocation (Fahy, 1982).

It is clear that Catholic school can provide an educational environment which enables and enhances religious adherence and commitment. However, that does not necessarily imply that all Catholic schools will do so to the same the same degree. An appropriate school climate cannot be assumed to exist simply because of a denominational label.

Catholic Education: Policy and Practice

In her doctoral thesis, Egan (1985) assesses how far sixteen year old pupils in Catholic schools in Wales agree with the Church's policies concerning religious education and also the way in which those policies are put into practice. She describes key aspects of the Catholic school ethos as they are experienced by pupils. Her sample includes youngsters in all the Catholic comprehensive schools in Wales. In addition, she applied the same research model to two smaller samples, one in the United States of America and one in Australia in order to provide a wider perspective to her main study. She finds that a striking similarity exists in most of the responses from all three continents and notes there is a large discrepancy between the ideal of Catholic education and the reality, especially so in the Welsh schools. Despite the mismatch, she notes that the majority of pupils in Wales are happy to be in Catholic schools, though religious education lessons are held in low esteem and their importance disregarded. She reports that pupils appear reluctant to make a commitment to the Christian ideal, that their moral and social development is inadequate and that too little attention is given to the distinctive quality of the education Catholic schools are intended to provide (Egan, 1985).

Later publications based on her research argue that although there is a high degree of potential for congruence between the religious ethos of Catholic homes and the ethos of Catholic schools, there is much less evidence that the potential is realised. The main reason she suggests for this failure is that the schools concerned create internal stresses by trying to cater for three disparate pupil groups while using an organisational approach which aims to create a working faith community within the school. In accepting and educating pupils from non-practising Catholic and non-Catholic backgrounds as well as committed Catholics, the ability to create a faith community is reduced and consequently the process of Catholic socialisation is inevitably weakened (Egan, 1986; Egan & Francis, 1986; Francis & Egan, 1987; 1990).

The Academic Performance of Catholic Schools in England

The scrutiny of Catholic schools as effective agents of Catholic socialisation in the wake of the Second Vatican Council was not matched at the time in England by a similar concern about their academic standards. Twenty years later the emphasis was still on their religious function, though it was often expressed in the more market-orientated terms such as 'effectiveness' and 'value for money' (Bavidge, 1983; Hanlon, 1986). However, the tradition of concern about academic standards in Catholic schools has a long history, even if, in the eyes of many Catholic commentators in England, it has often been a secondary issue.

There is evidence to suggest that, following the introduction of state sponsored universal education, Catholic schools performed well academically despite receiving lower levels of financial support. Finan (1975) reports, "... in 1884 the average passes in reading, writing and arithmetic were rather higher in the Catholic schools than the average for the country as a whole" (p. 8). Adams (1882) notes that, in 1875, they achieved the highest levels of complete passes at Standard One of all schools, Board schools coming second in the

league table. Again, in 1880, Adams records that Board schools were second to the Catholic schools in complete passes in reading, writing and arithmetic, with the Catholic, British and Wesleyan schools achieving the best results in reading. However, the relative academic superiority of Catholic schools did not extend beyond Standard One.

Eighty years later, Catholic schools did not appear to be so relatively successful. They were regarded as providing a poorer academic education than that offered in other local education authority maintained schools. One of Her Majesty's Inspectors, a Catholic, commented that when he was appointed to the Inspectorate in 1960 and sent to the north west he was given generally to understand by his new colleagues that Catholic schooling was inferior to the rest (Wake, 1986). Hornsby-Smith (1972), in a defence of the quality of Catholic education during this period, was only able to say: "In the absence of any hard evidence of a significantly lower academic or intellectual orientation in Catholic schools ... it cannot be claimed that the secular results of Catholic schools will inevitably be poorer" (p. 302).

While his rather shaky defence of the secular achievements of the Catholic schools of that time might be taken as confirmation of their lack of academic success, it is clear that such a situation was far from the ideal that was expected. The following statement appeared in an article about the aims of Catholic education in the Catholic magazine The Month shortly after Hornsby-Smith's defence was published, and was in part a response to it. It was an illustration of an often unspoken assumption. "If Catholic education is not better education than secular socialisation, it is inexcusable, it has no reason to exist ..."

(Bottomley, 1973, p. 234).

Amidst this kind of concern there was also some evidence suggesting that Catholic education at the time was academically successful. A study of the effects of social class on

the educational opportunities of Middlesborough school children found that Catholic children from large families gained a disproportionately large number of places in the grammar schools of the area (Floud et al, 1956). A similar investigation by the Catholic Education Council concerning the destinations of school leavers at the end of the academic year 1963-64 found that a higher proportion of school leavers from Catholic schools entered full-time further education than pupils from non-Catholic schools, though a lower proportion of boys went to the universities (Catholic Education Council, News Bulletin No. 14, 1967). Hornsby-Smith reported a survey of nearly sixteen thousand eight year old pupils in the Inner London Education Authority in 1968 which showed those in Catholic schools having a mean reading score of 99.2 compared to 96.9 in Church of England schools and 94.5 in local authority schools (Hornsby-Smith, 1978).

By the late 1980s and early 1990s the relative academic performance of Catholic schools seems to have improved. Using information relating to the early 1980s, Wake claims that a systematic reading of recently published HMI reports will certainly not show that Catholic schools are worse now than any others (Wake, 1986). Harder evidence of the relative academic success of Catholic schools is hinted at in two major studies of school effectiveness in England. Rutter and his associates include four voluntary aided schools in their survey of twelve Inner London Education Authority secondary schools. Though they do not make a detailed investigation of the importance of denominational status on the relative performance of pupils, they feel able to conclude that voluntary schools tend to have slightly better outcomes than the other schools, but that the differences are not statistically significant (Rutter et al, 1979). Mortimore and his colleagues also note several items that reflect well on voluntary schools in their larger sample of junior schools. They find that, in the development of cognitive skills though not in oracy, voluntary schools are more effective than county schools. Such schools tend to be more in tune with the twelve key factors of effectiveness that are identified. Pupils' demeanour and behaviour also

appear better in voluntary aided schools. Significantly, they conclude that voluntary status helps, but does not ensure, schools become effective (Mortimore et al, 1988).

However, since both these major studies make the assumption that there is no difference in philosophy or clientele between different types of voluntary schools, the findings are merely indicative of an area requiring more research. Moreover, since they do not look at effective religious outcomes, the results only indicate that voluntary church schools may fulfil the academic task of secular schools better than they do themselves.

The Catholic Church has a distinctive view of education. Consequently, it has a particular understanding of school effectiveness that requires some form of reference to the Catholic ideal of religious formation. Because it is an overtly religious ideal, an evaluation of the overall effectiveness of Catholic schools will require a different model to that used by a secular organisation to evaluate other LEA maintained schools. Provision for such differences has been made in the Office For Standards In Education (OFSTED) procedures that have been established for school inspection under the 1992 Education Act. However, in purely pedagogical matters there are likely to be close similarities between all schools, particularly following the implementation of the National Curriculum created by the 1988 Education Reform Act. The strategy devised by the government over the last decade to improve the quality of state education assumes that all maintained schools have fundamental similar purposes. Maintained Catholic schools are inevitably caught up in this approach which has greater public accountability at its core.

One aspect of that public scrutiny is the publication of examination results in the form of league tables in which schools are ranked based on the percentage of pupils obtaining five or more GCSE examination passes at grade A, B or C. The first set of league tables were published in 1992. Despite the limitations and deficiencies inherent in conclusions based

on analyses of raw examination results (Goldstein, 1984; Gray, et al, 1986; Jesson, 1992a, 1992b; McPherson, 1992), the comparisons provide some interesting patterns in school performance that deserve further attention (Marks, 1993). A superficial study of the league tables from 1992 onwards indicate that Catholic schools appear to perform well on the official government measure of successful schooling (Clare, 1994; Morris, 1994; Twiston-Davies, 1995; Longley, 1996).

My own study of the relative performance of denominational comprehensive schools in the 1992 GCSE examinations (Morris, 1994) indicates there may be grounds to support the view that pupils in Catholic schools achieve, on average, higher levels of academic success in the terms used by the 'league tables' than pupils in other maintained schools. To ensure as accurate a comparison as possible using the raw data, I considered only those schools designated 'comprehensive' by the Department for Education ($n = 2,845$) of which nearly twelve per cent ($n = 337$) are Catholic. One hundred and three of the one hundred and eight local education authorities include Catholic comprehensive schools, either maintained by the them or having grant maintained status. Taking the percentage of pupils obtaining five or more grades at A, B or C as the chosen measure of success, I found that in twenty-five LEAs Catholic comprehensive schools headed the local authority's league table and in seven cases they came bottom. In fourteen of LEAs, just over thirteen per cent, a Catholic school was in second place and in a further fourteen they were in third place. In ten they were first and second, and in three, they came first, second and third. An indication of the overall relative academic success of Catholic schools can be seen from the seven per cent of Catholic schools who were at the top of their respective leagues compared to only two per cent at the bottom. A further comparison within the one hundred and three individual LEA leagues where it could be made, revealed that the mean percentage of pupils obtaining 5 or more grades A, B or C in Catholic schools is higher than in their non-Catholic counterparts in over eighty per cent of cases (Morris 1994).

A limited amount of firmer evidence about the examination achievements of pupils in Catholic schools has emerged as a by-product of research by LEAs into their own schools' effectiveness. This research takes into account many of the reservations expressed about the use of raw data as a valid means of comparison and considers the effects of appropriate pupil factors such as gender, socio-economic background, ethnicity, measures of ability or previous levels of academic attainment.

For example, the former Inner London Education Authority (ILEA) monitored differences in examination performance of pupils in their secondary schools. After taking background factors into account it was concluded that the examination performance scores of students attending Roman Catholic schools in 1987 was higher than those of students attending county schools (Nuttall et al, 1990). Indeed, going to a Catholic school in ILEA at the time of the research could mean the difference between getting an A grade rather than a C grade in GCSE for children of the same ability (Hackett, 1990). Nuttall's findings were confirmed by a similar analysis of the 1990 results (Hackett, 1991).

On the other hand, a smaller study of same year's results undertaken, again by Nuttall, but for the Association of Metropolitan Authorities (AMA), in forty-two schools in four of the ten authorities in the former ILEA found no systematic differences between county and voluntary schools or between mixed and single sex schools once pupil variables had been taken into account (Nuttall et al, 1992). However, a second larger study by the same research group for the AMA, which analysed the 1991 examination results of one hundred and sixteen schools, confirmed the earlier findings that pupils in voluntary schools, excluding Church of England schools, performed significantly better than those in county schools (Thomas et al, 1993). Thomas and her colleagues include data from the four metropolitan authorities originally surveyed for the 1990 analysis plus a further five, one of which is outside the former ILEA.

Separate, independent analyses by individual London educational authorities of their own secondary schools' 1992 examination results following the demise of ILEA appear to reinforce the evidence from the London Boroughs included in the AMA surveys. Both the Tower Hamlets and Barking and Dagenham LEAs find that pupils in their Catholic schools achieve a higher average performance score than pupils in their other maintained schools (Tower Hamlets, Policy & Performing Section, 1992; Benton & McGeachie, 1993). The Tower Hamlets analysis calculates the pupils 'score' in each school by giving points for each examination grade from 7 for a grade A down to 0 for a grade U. The average in the two Catholic schools is 25.35 points. This is equivalent to the minimum score of a pupil achieving five 'good' GCSE passes on the criteria used by the Department for Education (DFE), representing five grade C passes. It compares to an average of 18.8 points, or three passes at grade C, for pupils in non-Catholic schools, a difference of two passes at grade C.

A 'value added' score taking into account the percentage of pupils allocated to one of three bands based on the performance of pupils in the London Reading Test taken five years earlier shows a close similarity between Catholic and non-Catholic schools, 7.95 compared to 8.04. The discrepancy in actual performance and similarity of the 'value added' scores may be a function of the statistical techniques used to calculate it and the better than average reading scores achieved by pupils in London Catholic Primary schools that has been noted by Hornsby-Smith (1978), Nuttall (1990) and Sinnott (1993). How far the apparent superior London Reading Test scores at age 11+ can be attributed to school factors has yet to be thoroughly investigated.

It can be argued that there are special factors associated with the London area which make it unsuitable as a basis for any generalisation of its perceived trends. A similar argument can be used about the surveys of school examination performance in the Metropolitan

Boroughs since they are numerically dominated by the former ILEA schools. However, there is also some evidence from outside the metropolitan areas suggesting that Catholic schools are particularly effective in achieving examination success.

Research into GCSE performance in Nottinghamshire in 1991 and 1992 uses a statistical modelling technique which identifies the schools most effective in enabling pupils to achieve examination success (Jesson et al, 1992; Jesson & Gray, 1993). The research model first identifies the factors which are closely associated with individual academic achievement. Of nine factors considered, leaving aside that of the school that pupils attend, the most influential in predicting examination performance are, in order, parental occupation, gender and, to a very much smaller extent, receipt of free school meals. Using those pupil characteristics, a model is produced which enables an 'expected score' to be calculated for each pupil. The model then takes the estimates of examination performance for all the pupils within each school and compares it with results the pupils actually achieved giving a comparison which enables particularly 'effective' or 'ineffective' schools to be identified. The chosen definition of a large divergence is approximately ten per cent either side of the mean, representing an average of 2.5 examination points per pupil, an improvement of one grade in two or three subjects (Jesson et al, 1992).

Analysis of both the 1991 and 1992 examination results found that only a small number of schools fall outside the central core of schools which achieve the sort of results that might be expected. In 1991, eight of the seventy-five schools, and in 1992, nine of the sixty-seven schools in the survey appear to boost their pupils performance by at least 2.5 points per pupil. Although it is not reported in the published account, in private correspondence with me, the education authority indicates that three of the four Catholic schools in Nottingham are in the small group of effective schools both in 1991 and 1992. None are in the group that appeared to depress pupil performance in either year (Everett, 1993). While

the reasons for such findings are not investigated, Everett suggests that the pupils attending Catholic schools may have different personal characteristics, values and attitudes. Consequently, on this admittedly untested hypothesis, it is argued any benefit in terms of examination results can not be attributed to the school itself being more academically effective than other schools (Everett, 1993).

The accumulated evidence from OFSTED inspections, carried out under the provisions of section nine of the Education Act 1992, provides the potential for national comparisons of different types of school across local authorities. In time, it will provide researchers with similar quantities of data to that available in the USA. Catholic schools provide a representational cross-section of schools in England and Wales but, as yet, there has been no published comparative analysis of their performance although the 1996 Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools cites a disproportionately high number of Catholic schools among those identified as being "successful in all major aspects of their work" (Woodhead, 1996, preface).

However, early indications of comparable levels of performance presented at a Diocesan Schools Commission Conference in Oxford (Spring 1996) suggest that, in the judgement of school inspectors based on OFSTED criteria, they provide a higher standard and quality of education than other secondary schools. The data show a significant difference in the mean scores on the two measures, though it is small in respect of the quality of education provided. The overall superiority of the Catholic schools ethos compared to other institutions is most evident, suggesting that it might be a contributing factor to the higher education standards achieved by their pupils. Ethos, as defined by OFSTED, is a composite of judgements on the quality of moral and cultural education, pupil behaviour and punctuality and the overall levels of attendance. In addition, in other factors, such as the overall effectiveness of the school as a community, the quality of the spiritual life of

the school and of the relationships within them, the superiority of Catholic schools is very noticeable (Agamber, 1996, see appendix 3).

Unfortunately, reports that note the apparent superior academic effectiveness of Catholic schools have not investigated much further in any attempt to establish causality. Some give possible explanations but these remain untested. Nuttall (1990) suggests that a higher average reading test scores of the intake may be a significant causal factor, though in the absence of any evidence of selection by ability rather than denominational preference by Catholic schools, he did not speculate why pupils in Catholic primary schools achieved the higher scores. When pupil factors are taken into account, most education authorities seem to believe that the answers to school effectiveness lie in the nature of the institutional organisation. Even so, in only one instance, and that a fleeting reference in private correspondence with me, is there any acknowledgement that religious attitudes and practices, or the lack of them, might in any way be a causal factor in schools social and academic outcomes. In a letter, a chief education officer hinted that the poor academic performance of one particular Catholic secondary school known to her might be connected with its lack of observable Christian principles and practices (Maden, 1994).

Academic Performance of Catholic School in the United States of America

Unlike the situation in England, in the decade since 1980 there has been a significant body of large scale research published in the United States that has specifically considered the academic effectiveness of Catholic schools. American researchers have available a huge data base of relevant information on which they have been able to draw to assess academic performance of students in different types of institutions.

In 1980, a large scale inquiry into the school and post-school records of some sixty thousand pupils in over one thousand high schools ($n = 1015$) was launched. The High

School and Beyond study (HSB) built upon information about the senior pupils high schools that had been regularly collected by the National Centre for Educational Statistics since 1972. Catholic schools and others with a high proportion of pupils from minority groups were deliberately over-represented in the initial survey for the study. Within each school a random sample of seventy-two pupils was chosen, half sophomores and half seniors. To provide longitudinal data the survey was repeated every two years until 1986. It provided information about the pupils and their family background, their experiences both during and after school, levels of academic achievement, attitudes and behaviour as well as a mass of data about the schools that they attended.

Using the 1980 data, Coleman and his colleagues (1982) compare the academic performance of pupils in Catholic schools with those attending other private schools and state schools. They find that Roman Catholic schools are much more effective in achieving high levels of academic achievement than their state run counterparts. Their success is achieved despite the fact that the schools concerned have less money than state schools, pay their teachers less and have larger classes. The level of school effectiveness in this area seems to be greater, moreover, with pupils from ethnic minorities and lower socio-economic groups.

A second independent study by Greeley (1982) concentrated on the differential school effects for black and Hispanic pupils. Its general findings support those of Coleman and indicate that the beneficial academic effects associated with attending a Catholic school are more noticeable for black and Hispanic pupils than for others. These studies give strong statistical underpinning to qualitative research (Cibulka et al, 1982) that indicated the greater effectiveness of inner city Catholic elementary schools in terms of academic productivity.

The follow-up to the HSB survey in 1982 included nearly ninety-five per cent of the original sample. The high participation rate and degree of uniformity in the data collected enabled the researchers to study changes that had taken place as pupils progress from their sophomore to senior years. Hoffer makes use of the additional data available and brings together the two earlier studies of Greeley and Coleman to examine the inferences that they had drawn in the light of the new information (Hoffer et al, 1985). The study finds that between the sophomore and senior years the Catholic school advantage in vocabulary, reading, math and writing increases, indicating not a sustained but an increased Catholic school advantage. It confirms the findings of Coleman and Greeley that it is the socially disadvantaged students who are likely to profit the most from attending Catholic secondary school. It also indicates that Catholic schools create a greater degree of social equality between students. Disadvantaged pupils in Catholic schools achieve better academic standards overall and at the same time narrowed the academic gap between themselves and the most advantaged pupils. In contrast, in state schools the difference between the two socio-economic groups grows wider (Hoffer, et al, 1985).

The findings of Coleman, Hoffer and their colleagues have not gone unchallenged, however. Other analyses of the same data find much less compelling evidence (Alexander & Pallas, 1983, 1984, 1985; Willms, 1985). The analyses by Alexander and Pallas show smaller effects which they summarise as representing about two-thirds of a year's growth compared to Hoffer's view of about a year. They argue that this represents negligible difference between the two types of school though, in reply, Hoffer and his colleagues (1985) point out that since the growth was within a two year period their findings indicated that the average state school pupil learns at two-thirds of the rate of Catholic school pupils. Over a school life that would represent a considerable difference in achievement.

Even where the American researchers agree about the size of the Catholic school effect, there is still disagreement about its significance, and it is clear that any review of the literature can be coloured by the reviewers ideological standpoint. However, the weight of evidence seems to indicate that the average academic achievement of pupils in Catholic schools in the USA is higher than of pupils in state schools (Jencks, 1985).

More recently, some weight has been given to the Hoffer view of differential school effectiveness by a small comparative study of inner city New York and Washington secondary schools. All the schools are in particularly deprived areas and serve very disadvantaged pupils. It finds that the academically successful schools are either Catholic or 'magnet' schools, that is, institutions specialising in one or more aspects of the usual secondary school curriculum (Hill et al, 1990).

Other recently published longitudinal research of school effectiveness incorporates fresh analyses of the HSB data with original field work research in seven very different Catholic high schools (Bryk et al, 1993). While giving strong support to the basic conclusions reached by Coleman et al (1982), Greeley (1982) and Hoffer et al (1985), it concentrates more on the reasons why the effects should be as they are. Bryk and his colleagues conclude that pupils in Catholic high schools not only achieve higher academic standards but that achievement in this area is more equitable distributed according to race and social class than in state schools. On the other hand, they accept that arguments may still exist as to the degree of that superiority. However, it is not the fact of superior performance but the reasons for it, and what it may mean for the wider educational provision in the USA, that they regard as the most important question. Their conclusions about causal influences focus on the Catholic nature of the education that the schools provide. They point to four major factors which, within the USA educational system, they regard as characteristic of a

Catholic ideology that helps shape the actions of staff in Catholic schools and the form of education they provide. These are:

- *A common academic, spiritual and moral curriculum which has its raison d'etre in a Catholic understanding of humanity and its capacity to search for truth and which views education and knowledge as an end in itself*
- *A communal structure based round three core Catholic features; shared activities such as liturgies, retreats and (what in England would be called) out of school activities; established religious rituals which anchor the school within the larger, world-wide Catholic tradition; and the extended role of teachers beyond the classroom into the religious community of which the pupils are also a part*
- *A high degree of school autonomy which enables virtually all important decisions to be made at the school level*
- *A social ideology or ethic centred on the person of Christ which underpins the organisational concept of subsidiarity, a set of shared beliefs about what students should learn, agreed norms of instruction, agreed views of how people should relate to one another and a set of agreed moral commitments*

(Bryk et al, 1993, p. 298 - 304)

Possible alternative non-religious explanations for the differences in effectiveness between Catholic and non-Catholic schools have exercised other researchers. While accepting the basic premise of the superiority of the Catholic schools system in the USA, Chubb and Moe (1988) draw very different conclusions to those of Bryk about the importance of school autonomy. They argue strongly that the differences across the sectors are anchored in the logic of politics and market philosophy. Whereas non-Catholic public or state schools are subordinates in a hierarchical system of democratic politics, private schools, the vast majority of which are Catholic, are largely autonomous institutions controlled by market forces (Chubb & Moe, 1988). Although it is the case that the mainly private Catholic schools have much greater autonomy and, being 'site-based', have fewer centralised controls than their state counterparts, the conclusions that Chubb and Moe draw have been strongly challenged (Tweedie, 1990; Riley, 1990; Bryk & Lee, 1992; Goldstein, 1993).

Tweedie points to the failure of Chubb and Moe to consider "elements in the institutional structure of private schools that would seem to be vital, such as the Catholic church's doctrine and hierarchy" (Tweedie, 1990, p.553). Riley also points to the lack of consideration given to the various religious aspects involved in the effects that are observed (Riley, 1990). Bryk and Lee suggest that the conclusions are best viewed as a policy argument. While accepting the validity of the statistical evidence about the relative performance of different types of school upon which Chubb and Moe have built their argument, they conclude that Chubb and Moe clearly have a preference for market control but that there is not sufficient empirical evidence to support their conclusion (Bryk & Lee, 1992). More trenchant criticism has been voiced by Goldstein in his review of Chubb and Moe's book Politics, Markets and America's Schools. He claims that their study "sadly tends to bring the activities of the research community into disrepute ... have(ing) paid scant regard to established canons of research propriety, to the extent of allowing mutually incompatible conclusions to coexist" (Goldstein, 1993, p. 118). His harsh criticism centres on their methodology and the claims to causality. He argues that Chubb and Moe do not use hierarchical or multi-level models although they are the accepted procedures for this form of school analysis. Another of his concerns is way in which they have created their measure of school organisation. He claims that their choice, derived from ten indicators all of which have a strong relationship with academic success, could not then be used legitimately to test the hypothesis that institutional organisation is related to student academic achievement. Goldstein concludes that, based on such tautological reasoning, "it is difficult to take seriously the authors' labelling of this measure as 'organisation' " (Goldstein, 1993, p. 117).

However, the criticisms do not attack the underlying claim that Catholic schools seem more effective in pursuing academic achievement than state schools and though the educational systems in England and the USA are very different, Bryk's analysis, which

focuses on the influence of Catholicity in promoting academic achievement, has some relevance for future policy decisions made in England by individual schools and those with overall responsibility for the maintained sector of education.

Summary

The weight of evidence suggests that pupils attending Catholic schools are more positively disposed towards the Christian religion and obtain higher levels of academic achievement than similar pupils attending non-Catholic schools. There may be a causal connection between the two factors. While the evidence concerning pupils attitudes towards Christianity in the UK is fairly weighty, only in the USA has the academic superiority of Catholic schools been thoroughly investigated. There is, as yet, no research in English schools that has focused exclusively on this question. The following chapter, therefore, will describe such an investigation, taking into account relevant background factors that are known to influence academic achievement.

CHAPTER 4

THE ACADEMIC EFFECTIVENESS AND THE CATHOLIC EFFECT: CONTRASTING CASES IN ONE SHIRE COUNTY

Introduction

In chapter 3 I suggested that pupils attending Catholic schools are more likely to achieve higher levels of academic success than pupils of similar ability and background in non-Catholic schools. While evidence from the USA broadly supports this claim, there are no studies specifically investigating the possibility in England. What evidence there is has arisen as a by-product of other research (Rutter et al, 1979; Nuttall, 1990; Thomas et al, 1993) or has used unsophisticated techniques which make the findings merely indicative (Morris, 1994).

This chapter takes the investigation further. In particular it places the accumulated signs of a Catholic school effect on academic achievement on a firmer footing. It does so by offering a quantitative study that compares the academic performance of pupils attending the Catholic comprehensive schools in one local education authority with those of pupils at other maintained comprehensive schools and with each other. It is concerned with identifying schools which appear to be either particularly effective or ineffective in helping pupils achieve success in public examinations.

Study Outline

Analyses of the 1992 General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) examination results obtained by pupils in schools designated as comprehensive by the Department of Education has shown large disparities between the highest and lowest achieving schools across the country and, more significantly, within individual local education authorities. A

comparison of the percentage of pupils obtaining five or more GCSE examination grades A-C shows that the ratio between the most and least successful schools is ten or more in one third of authorities (Marks, 1993). In eighty-three of the one hundred and three authorities where a comparison of Catholic and non-Catholic comprehensive schools was possible, the mean percentage of pupils obtaining five or more grades A-C was higher in the Catholic schools than their non-Catholic counterparts. Further, in forty-three authorities Catholic schools were first, second or third in the rankings based on the government's figures (Morris, 1994).

Such apparently clear comparisons tell us a great deal about the aggregate performance of the pupils. What they ignore are individual differences and relevant background factors,. They also obscure the effects that a particular school may have in helping its pupils to achieve good or better examination results. Consequently, they tell us little about the quality of schools as institutions for teaching and learning.

This chapter, therefore, investigates more closely the apparent academic effectiveness of Catholic schools by building on my analysis of the first GCSE examination results published by the government in November 1992 (Morris, 1994). It defines academic achievement as performance in GCSE examinations. Schools are defined as being effective if their pupils perform at a higher level than similar pupils at the 'average school', taking into account factors known to affect pupils performance, such as gender, intellectual ability and socio-economic background. The 'average school' refers to those whose GCSE scores are at or near the mean level, in a statistical sense, of all schools in the sample (Cuttance, 1985). Significantly, given the focus of this chapter, it compares the effectiveness of two Catholic schools in the sample with their non-Catholic counterparts and also with each other.

The investigation is based in one shire county LEA of middle ranking size. The LEA maintains a mixture of comprehensive, grammar and modern schools, has a wide range of urban, suburban and rural areas and a politically balanced county council representing a populous and mainly industrialised north and more sparsely populated mainly rural southern area. In 1992 there were a total of thirty-seven secondary schools in the county including four Catholic schools and an equivalent number which had recently acquired grant maintained status. The majority, some twenty-one schools, are classed as mixed sex comprehensive of which two are Catholic. This compares favourably with the national situation where approximately ten per cent of all secondary schools are Catholic (Kay, 1988). As such it can be claimed that the LEA represents an 'average authority'. In addition it was one of the LEAs in which Catholic schools were ranked in the top three schools based on the 1992 GCSE examination results (Morris, 1994).

Sample

The headteachers of all twenty-one schools in the LEA designated as comprehensive by the Department for Education were invited to provide data on their 1991/92 Year 11 cohort in the spring term of the following academic year. The schools are spread throughout the five districts that form the county, but because of a system of selection at 11+ that operates in two areas, they are mainly concentrated in the north, east and central parts.

Of the two Catholic comprehensive schools which make up the total, one is located in the north, the other in the central area. Twenty of the twenty-one headteachers agreed to supply information for the study. The number of pupils on the registers of the participating schools at 31st January 1992 was three thousand, two hundred and sixty-eight, representing ninety-five per cent of the total comprehensive school population in the local authority.

Measures

To complement the data about the overall level of school performance published by the government, the schools provided me with access to their internal records enabling four additional data sets for each pupil to be collected which are known to have an effect on levels of academic achievement. These included information on (1) gender, (2) the GCSE examinations for which pupils were entered and their achievements, (3) standardised scores on educational tests taken at age eleven and (4) the pupils' home address.

School Examination Performance

An indication of the relative academic performance of schools in the 1992 GCSE was available from the information published by the government in November of that year. Data were organised under four headings, the percentage of the pupils on roll in September 1991 who obtained (1) five or more grades A-C, (2) five or more grades A-G, (3) at least one grade A-C and (4) at least one grade A-G. Information was presented in the form of 'league tables' showing the schools in rank order. The main criterion for ranking was the percentage obtaining five or more grades A-C. If two or more schools had equal numbers on this measure the percentage gaining five or more grades A-G was used to differentiate between them.

Pupil Examination Achievement

Details of the individual pupil's results of GCSE examinations taken in the summer term of the 1991-92 academic year were recorded and allocated a numerical value depending upon the grade achieved. A total examination points score calculated for each pupil. The values for each grade were as follows: grade A = 7 points, grade B = 6 points, grade C = 5 points, grade D = 4 points, grade E = 3 points, grade F = 2 points, grade G = 1 point. The total points score is used as the measure of academic achievement.

To some extent this measure does not compare like with like because differential patterns of examination entry adopted by individual schools will have an effect on the maximum points score possible for any one pupil (Jesson et al, 1992). There may even be different entry patterns for groups of pupils within a school (Glogg & Fidler, 1990). Some studies have used a matched sample technique to overcome the disparity, taking the pupils best seven or eight grades but including subjects such as Maths and English that are taken by the vast majority of pupils. However, such an approach does not ensure equity since all pupils will not have taken the same additional five or six subjects. In addition, there is not exact comparability between subjects so that it may be 'easier' to obtain a particular grade in one subject than with another. The same may apply to different examination boards (Nuttall et al, 1974; Hedger, 1992).

The pattern of examination entries and subject options differ from school to school. There may be a policy limiting the number of examinations for which pupils are entered. Such a policy may be based on academic criteria, for example a pre-determined minimum standard in 'mock' examinations. On the other hand, because of the cost to the school in entering pupils for public examination, financial criteria may determine the number of courses any individual will take. Within the statutory constraints, and where it is possible to have choice, some schools provide a curriculum differentiated in breadth and content for pupils of different abilities which, in turn, will determine the number and range of examinations available to them. Others extend the concept of a core curriculum to cover all their pupils and leave little or no choice for pupils. Whatever curriculum pattern is provided, clearly it is a reflection of attitudes and values held by the school which contribute to the creation of its ethos and can affect pupil attitudes both to themselves and to their studies. These, in turn, have been shown to be closely associated with levels of academic success. Consequently, since one concern of this study is to consider the ways in which school process affected academic success, it was decided to use the total levels of

achievement in public examinations as the most appropriate measure rather than comparing an common number examination scores, for example, each pupil's best seven or eight results.

Age and Gender

The age and sex of each pupil were recorded. Pupils who were aged sixteen on or before August 31st 1991 were excluded from the sample. There were a small number of pupils who, for a number of reasons, were a year older than the vast majority of the cohort. Their GCSE examination results were also not used in the analysis.

The gender split in schools is important because of the accumulation of evidence showing that girls obtain better examination results than boys in most subjects at age 16+ (Forrest et al, 1971; Nuttall et al, 1974; Nuttall, 1990; Hedger, 1992; Thomas et al, 1993; Woodhead, 1996). This is not the case with achievement at Advanced Level, where boys, on average, perform better than girls (Nuttall, 1988; Eccleston et al, 1990; Statistics of Education, 1994). Since mixed schools can differ quite drastically in the ratio of the sexes in particular year groups, there could be a noticeable effect on the overall levels of school achievement from year to year and when schools are compared (Jesson et al, 1992).

Intellectual Ability

Until 1989 scores on a standardised non-verbal test had been administered to all pupils within the LEA as part of a pupil record keeping policy. The cohort used in this study had taken the test during the year preceding their transfer into the secondary sector. The results of this test were used as a measure of pupils' overall academic ability and provided a guide for setting or streaming in some of the secondary schools. The National Foundation for Educational Research non-verbal DH test (No. 15A) was administered by the primary school in the summer term of the pupils' final year.

The test was first constructed in 1951. It was intended for children of about eleven years of age. As such, it is appropriate for use with pupils in the last year in the primary sector before their transfer to secondary school. It was originally administered to a fully representative sample of three thousand, four hundred and fifteen children aged between 10.08 and 11.10 years. The standardised scores are arranged with a mean of 100 and a standard deviation of 15 established by assessing each child with a representative sample of others having the identical age. A reliability coefficient of 0.95 is claimed for the test using the Kuder-Richardson formula 20. This gives a standard error of measurement of 3.4. Re-standardisation of the test was undertaken in 1974 with nine thousand, seven hundred and eighty-five children aged between 11.06 and 12.06 years. It gave a reliability coefficient of 0.94 (Kuder-Richardson formula 21) and a standard error of 3.6. This means that in only one case in twenty is the score obtained on the test by a pupil likely to be greater or less than the true score by more than seven points.

The test is a good indicator of subsequent achievement in GCSE examinations. One local authority reports a highly significant correlation between the two measures (Pearson product moment $r = 0.70$; $p < .001$) on a representative sample of 715 pupils across the county. Regression analysis of the relationship indicates that nearly half of pupils G.C.S.E. performance is explained by their non-verbal reasoning score ($r^2 = 0.49$) (Warwickshire County Council, 1993). The same report notes that it is a better single predictor of examination achievement than Reading Age ($r = 0.50$, $p < .001$).

Ethnicity

The influence of the home circumstances on pupil achievement in school is well documented in Ministry of Education reports ('Early Leaving', 1954; 'Newsom', 1963) and by independent researchers (Douglas, 1964; 1968; Swift, 1966; Clegg & Megson, 1973). As the number and size of ethnic minorities groups have increased in recent years in

England, an additional facet has been added to the diversity of home backgrounds noted in the 1950s and '60s, that may affect academic achievement at school. The evidence, however, is inconclusive. Some influential documents such as the Swann Report (DES, 1985) point to an under achievement of black pupils at school. Some studies also report that white children obtain higher levels of success in public examinations (Mabey, 1986; Drew & Gray, 1990); others have found the opposite (Kysel, 1988; Nuttall, 1990; Thomas et al, 1993). Other studies point to differences in levels of achievement within broad categories of ethnic minorities groups. For example, within the Asian grouping, the academic performance of ILEA pupils from Pakistani, India and South East Asia was far superior to that of Bangladeshi children (Nuttall, 1990; Thomas et al, 1993). These studies also indicated that overall Asian pupils were performing the best and those of Caribbean origin the worst of all the ethnic groups studies. The research by Thomas, based on one hundred and sixteen schools in nine local authorities, also found that the proportion of pupils for whom English is a second language did not appear to be systematically associated with lower performance (Thomas et al, 1993). A longitudinal study of three thousand pupils in twenty multi-racial schools located in four areas of the country concluded that there was little or no difference between the ethnic groups and that the school attended by the pupil was much more important factor than ethnicity (Smith & Tomlinson, 1989). It has also been argued that any differences that are found have more to do with social and economic factors, for example, relative levels of deprivation experienced by children of ethnic minorities or the attitudes of parents, teachers and peers, rather than ethnicity as such (Drew & Gray, 1990; Nuttall, 1990).

Very few pupils in the sample used for my study are from ethnic minority groups. The majority of those who do fall into this category are came from an Asian background, mainly Indian and Pakistani, and only form a significant group in two schools. While much recent evidence suggests that such pupils may perform better in examinations than other

groups including their white counterparts (Nuttall, 1990, Nuttall et al, 1992), on balance it was decided that ethnicity was not likely to be a significant factor because the numbers were so small. Their presence may have tended to enhance the level of school examination achievement when other factors such as social class were taken into account, but it was estimated that the overall effect would be negligible.

Socio-Economic Status

It is generally accepted that social class is a significant factor in academic achievement. Recent research has reported that pupils from low socio-economic status homes are more affected by their schools than pupils from an 'average' background (Cuttance, 1989). Contrary effects have been reported by Gray et al (1986). There are difficulties that arise when trying to identify and quantify the extent of the influence. It is not easy for researchers to find or collect accurate and reliable measures, especially in the more socially mobile society of England in the 1980s and 1990s compared to the period in which most of the research was first carried out. Any chosen measure depends for its validity upon two interacting factors, social status and social class. Social status is usually taken to be a matter of social honour, prestige or respect accorded to different recognisable social groups. Social class, on the other hand, is a matter of a group's economic and material interest, power and advantage. This will largely depend on the position held within the occupational division of labour, but not entirely so, since economic interests should not be regarded as identical with income (Heath, 1980).

In the 1960s and 1970s researchers in England made great use of models that were based on parental occupation using, or being adapted from, the Registrar General's five broad categories used in the government's decennial census of population. While the categories have remained constant, the occupations are socio-economic in character and will change over years. In the early 1960s the examples for each category were: (1) Professional, for

example, lawyers and doctors; (2) Intermediate, for example teachers and farmers; (3) Skilled and Clerical, such as most factory, clerical and shop workers; (4) Semi-skilled, such as drivers of various sorts and window cleaners; (5) Unskilled, for example labourers of all types. Another extensively used model was the Hall-Jones scale (Robertson, 1974).

Some researchers, however, argued that the father's occupation was not the best measure of social class and that an aggregated index, taking into account such items as income, life-style, educational history of the parent(s) and occupational status, would be more precise. In the absence of a recognised index, occupational prestige, if it could be measured accurately, provided the best measure from a sociological point of view (Ford, 1969). The Newsom Report (1963) supports that view, noting the influence of neighbourhood as a constant and meaningful factor in pupils' lives and levels of educational attainment (p. 188). More recently, it has been argued that where people live provides a much better guide to the sociologists conception of social class than occupation (Hargreaves, 1982). A similar argument, from a journalistic perspective, has been developed by Hadfield & Skipworth (1994).

There is still the problem of classification and data collection. It has been argued that census information can provide useful sources of appropriate surrogate measures of social class (McCallum, 1993). Consequently, using the ideas suggested by Hargreaves and McCallum, a measure based on an objective and constant measurement of the family home in relation to others across the country provided a suitable surrogate of socio-economic status for the purposes of my study. The address of the family home gave an indication of social background. By relating them to the eight valuation bands graded A to H used for the purposes of the council tax, I was able to establish a reasonable and appropriate surrogate measure of socio-economic status.

Such a measure, even if it is generally suitable, still creates some difficulties in research of this type. It may reflect the socio-economic status of the population at large, but the state school population across England may not necessarily have a similar distribution. In this case, the attempt to match my sample of schools to the socio-economic distribution across the county encountered additional problems. My sample was of comprehensive schools only, in a county with a policy of selection in some areas. Pupils do not always attend school in the area where they live, especially those living close to the county boundaries. Also, a proportion of pupils, predominately the more affluent, are educated in the private sector. Consequently, the use, and adaptation, of the eight point measure to the particular circumstances of school research had to be done with great care.

Experimental Sample

Complete data were not available for all pupils in the twenty schools in my sample who had agreed to provide information. While a full set of examination results was available ($n = 3268$), other data sets had missing cases (Verbal Reasoning, $n = 2452$; Socio-economic status, $n = 2335$).

The reasons for these omissions are varied. In some cases, for instance, individual pupil files could not be found or had incomplete information. In others, files of pupils who had transferred to secondary school from outside the county did not include the appropriate information. Some of the primary schools either did not administer the test or did not record the result on the pupils record cards. Two secondary schools had destroyed all the files that were sent to them when the pupils transferred from their primary schools and while much of the information they had contained had been transcribed, the NFER non-verbal DH scores had been omitted. In addition, there were occasions when it was not possible to match the addresses in the school registers with the council tax data held at the

county borough offices. Consequently, there was no socio-economic measure for some pupils.

All missing data were recorded as 999 allowing listwise deletions of such cases. There were full data sets available for 2335 pupils from eighteen of the twenty schools. This represents seventy-one per cent of the pupils available to me, some sixty-eight per cent of all comprehensive school pupils in the county.

Procedure and Data Analysis

The initial data collection was undertaken in the twenty comprehensive schools that agreed to participate. The pupils' NFER non-verbal standardised test results and a socio-economic factor were recorded both as individual scores and also aggregated into sub-groups for different aspects of the investigation. Table I shows the NFER test scores for all pupils for whom such information was available ($n = 2452$). The grouping is based on the standardised scoring method employed by the test which has a mean score of 100 and standard deviation of 15. This produces six sub-groups based on a normal distribution but the sample is skewed. There are no pupils in any school scoring less than two standard deviations below the mean. Consequently, for the purpose of this study, five main sub-groups are used in the analysis.

Table I

NON-VERBAL REASONING - POPULATION DISTRIBUTION

NFER DH REASONING	SAMPLE n = 2452	SAMPLE		Std. Dist. NFER DH	
		%	Cum%	%	Cum %
BELOW 70	0	0	0.0	2.27	2.27
70 - 84	102	4.2	4.2	13.59	15.86
85 - 99	555	22.6	26.8	34.59	50.45
100 - 114	1016	41.4	68.2	34.59	84.04
115 - 129	651	26.6	94.8	13.59	97.63
ABOVE 130	128	5.2	100	2.27	100

Tables II (i) and II (ii) respectively give the percentage of households in each district and in the county, and the total number of properties, again subdivided into the five districts. The diverse nature of the districts can be clearly seen, reflecting the lower socio-economic status of the largely industrial and urban northern areas compared to the more rural south of the county.

Table II (i)

SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS - COUNCIL TAX BANDINGS
PERCENTAGE OF COUNTY POPULATION BY DISTRICT

TAX BAND	DISTRICT 1 HOMES %	DISTRICT 2 HOMES %	DISTRICT 3 HOMES %	DISTRICT 4 HOMES %	DISTRICT 5 HOMES %	COUNTY HOMES %
A	38.12	23.94	19.82	7.07	6.23	18.36
B	23.62	25.12	25.79	19.09	12.56	20.57
C	22.50	21.91	26.66	27.71	29.32	25.97
D	11.37	13.50	11.76	21.24	17.32	15.46
E	3.10	7.64	7.95	10.21	15.38	9.05
F	1.00	4.65	4.70	7.44	8.37	5.32
G	0.30	2.92	3.07	6.23	8.92	4.50
H	0.03	0.32	0.26	1.00	1.90	0.77
TOTAL	100.04	100.00	100.01	99.99	100.00	100.00

Table II (ii)

SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS - COUNCIL TAX BANDINGS
COUNTY POPULATION BY DISTRICT

TAX BAND	DISTRICT 1 HOMES n =	DISTRICT 2 HOMES n =	DISTRICT 3 HOMES n =	DISTRICT 4 HOMES n =	DISTRICT 5 HOMES n =	COUNTY HOMES n =
A	18,012	5,873	7,052	3,539	2,854	37,330
B	11,161	6,161	9,174	9,552	5,757	41,805
C	10,628	5,373	9,483	13,863	13,438	52,785
D	5,373	3,311	4,185	10,628	7,936	31,433
E	1,464	1,875	2,829	5,109	7,048	18,325
F	452	1,141	1,671	3,722	3,838	10,824
G	141	716	1,091	3,115	4,086	9,149
H	14	78	91	502	873	1,558
TOTAL	47,245	24,528	35,576	50,030	45,830	203,209

The eight point socio-economic scale was divided into four sub-groups as shown in Table II (iii). The division is that which seemed to me to most appropriately reflect the social nature of the county and the sample of population, bearing in mind the difficulties in matching the sample pupils homes (n = 2335) to that of the county as a whole (n = 203,209).

Table II (iii)

SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS - COUNCIL TAX BANDINGS

VALUATION AT 1/4/91	TAX BAND	SUBGROUP	SAMPLE	% SAMPLE	% COUNTY
BELOW £40,000	A	1	382	16.36	18.36
£40,000 - £52,000	B	2			
£52,000 - £68,000	C	2	1224	52.42	46.54
£68,000 - £88,000	D	3			
£88,000 - £120,000	E	3	573	24.54	24.51
£120,000 - £160,000	F	4			
£160,000 - £320,000	G	4	156	6.68	10.59
OVER £320,000	H	4			

The data were analysed by means of Pearson product moment correlation, linear multiple regression and box and whisker plot, using the SPSS for Windows: Release 6.0 (Norusis, 1993). A form of multi-level modelling was also used as a means of comparing the relative academic performance of the eighteen schools making up the final sample.

Variations Between Schools

Data were collected for each pupil for measures of academic achievement, socio-economic status and intelligence as measured on a non-verbal reasoning test. Variations between subsets of the sample, representing individual schools sub-divided by gender were tested using Scheffe's S method. It is particularly suitable for multiple comparison tests in this case where the nature of the research does not allow for equal sized groups. It has a low experimental error rate and is extremely robust under a wide variety of conditions and

violations of the assumptions of normality and homogeneity of variance. However, because it is especially rigorous with regard to type one errors and leads to fewer significant results than the t-test, for example, Scheffe recommends that lower significance levels than normal can be interpreted, i.e. $p < .10$ (Keselman & Toothaker, 1974; Ferguson, 1971). In this case, however, a more conservative approach was taken and the higher significance limit used i.e. $p < .05$.

Correlation and Regression

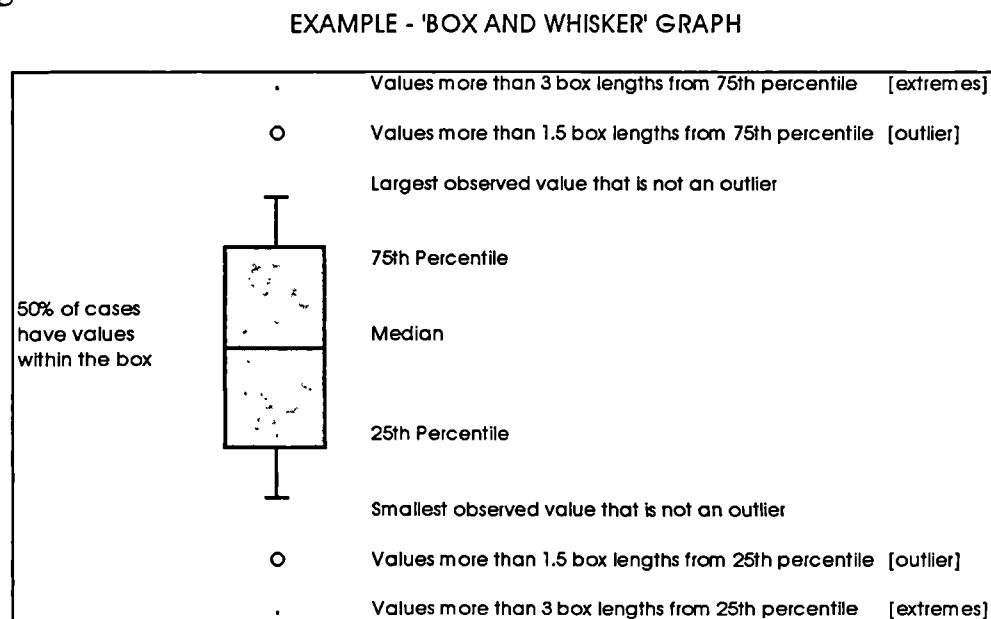
The correlation between the two measures (r) gives an indication of the strength of the relationship. This can range from -1 (perfect disagreement, they vary inversely) through 0 (no relationship), to +1 (perfect agreement, they vary directly and proportionately). Linear regression analysis was used to show the extent to which Y scores are dependent upon the X score and consequently how accurately the one can be predicted from the other. The regression calculation (r^2) measures the rate of variance between the measures. It enables a line of 'best fit' through the cases to be plotted. The value of r^2 can be said to indicate the extent to which one variable is explained by the other. For example if $r^2 = 0.64$ it suggests that sixty-four per cent of the variation is explained by the other variable. The sum of the vertical distances between the regression line and the points on the graph will be the same on either side of the line. As such, it can be said to represent the average and enable a score on the Y axis to be 'predicted' from the point of intersection of values on the X axis.

'Box and Whisker' Analysis

A 'box and whisker' plot provides diagrammatic information about the distribution of the observed values for each school and sub-group within the schools. It illustrates how closely the cases cluster and summarises information about the distribution of values rather than the values themselves, plotting the median, the 25th percentile, the 75th percentile

and any extreme values. Consequently, it gives an indication of whether the observed values are skewed and their spread or variability (Norusis, 1993). An annotated sketch is shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1



Adding Value - Multi-level Modelling of Hierarchical Data

The data available from the government's publication of schools GCSE examination results are published in raw form using four main variables: (1) the percentage of pupils obtaining five or more grades A-C; (2) the percentage of pupils obtaining five or more grades A-G; (3) the percentage of pupils obtaining one or more grade A-C; and (4) the percentage of pupils obtaining one or more grade A-G. Table III shows the twenty-one comprehensive schools in the initial sample set out in a league table based on the government's data.

Schools C and D are the two Catholic schools in the sample. Their respective levels of academic achievement are very similar when presented in this format. However, while giving some information, data in this form do not provide a very useful basis for inter-school comparisons (Goldstein, 1984; Gray et al, 1986; Jesson, 1992; McPherson, 1992).

For example, the difference between the top and bottom ranking schools is large. Based on the percentage of pupils achieving 5+ grades A-C, the 'best' school is 4.5 times as successful as the 'worst'. On the same measure, the two Catholic schools have an identical performance. Yet the population characteristics of the 'best' and 'worst' schools, and of the two Catholic schools, are markedly different and the raw data do not take it into account.

Table III

1992 GCSE EXAMINATION RESULTS - GOVERNMENT DATA

RANK ORDER	ROLL	% 5+ A-C	% 5+ A-G	% 1+ A-C	% 1+ A-G
SCHOOL A	180	58	98	84	99
SCHOOL B	183	54	91	81	98
SCHOOL C	150	49	99	81	100
SCHOOL D	230	49	88	86	97
SCHOOL E	142	44	92	71	96
SCHOOL F	177	41	97	76	99
SCHOOL G	197	39	96	66	99
SCHOOL H	160	39	91	70	97
SCHOOL I	156	38	94	74	96
SCHOOL J	171	36	85	63	99
SCHOOL K	166	35	84	59	98
SCHOOL L	142	35	80	61	96
SCHOOL M	287	32	87	64	94
SCHOOL N	209	31	83	68	95
SCHOOL O	155	29	86	57	98
SCHOOL P	152	28	96	74	98
SCHOOL Q	138	25	80	67	93
SCHOOL R	101	21	85	46	98
SCHOOL S	120	21	74	55	100
SCHOOL T	116	16	74	45	96
SCHOOL U	119	13	76	29	93

A clearer picture of a school's relative performance can be obtained by using more sophisticated analytical techniques which recognise the hierarchical nature of the chosen measures. By hierarchical, I mean, for example that an overall measure of school academic performance is made up of individuals who are grouped into classes, come from a certain neighbourhood, attend a particular school, which is part of a local education authority. At

each stage it is assumed that the groups will have similarities which are not shared by others. By considering data in this way, rather than using aggregated measures, more accurate comparisons can be made. Indeed, it is argued that analyses which ignore the hierarchical nature of data are likely to lead to fallacious conclusions (Schagen, 1991).

The most sophisticated statistical form of this type of analysis is that of multi-level modelling. It is a relatively new approach, but in broad terms is a refined version of multiple regression analysis. It enables one to define a single outcome variable (e.g. examination results for a school) plus a number of other background variables which could influence that outcome. The background variables can be specific to the individual (e.g. gender, ethnicity, test scores) or to a school (e.g. type, size). School differences in the outcome variable can be calculated in the multi-level model as school level residuals. Their magnitude tells us something about differences between schools once allowances have been made for everything else which can be measured.

There are a variety of ways in which hierarchical techniques are used by both individual researchers and local education authorities seeking a clearer understanding of the effectiveness of schools (Hutchinson, 1991; Birnbaum, 1993; Hill, 1994). My primary concern is to identify outlying schools. That is, those which perform particularly well or poorly with their individual pupils compared to that of similar pupils in the average school in the sample. Consequently, the main method I have chosen is a very simple and relatively unsophisticated one in which a model of the overall examination points score that individual pupils could reasonably be expected to achieve from the total number of examinations they enter is established, taking into account relevant background factors.

The mean examination points score obtained by all pupils in each of forty subgroups of the sample is calculated. The sub-groups are defined in terms of gender, intelligence and

socio-economic status. The mean score represents score of the 'average pupil' in that sub-group. Since schools differ in their pupil composition, a comparison of the actual examination performance of pupils in any one sub-group in any particular school can be made with similar sub-groups in other schools. By aggregating the sub-groups' performance a measure of school performance is established and a more accurate comparison of institutional academic effectiveness can be made which takes into account the gender, intelligence and socio-economic background of pupils and the school they attend. In this way it is possible to compare the relative effectiveness of the schools in helping their particular pupils to obtain the level of examination success that they achieved. Details of the methodology I have used are given in appendix 1.

Results of School Comparisons

Raw Data Differences

Table IV compares the rank order of the twenty-one comprehensive schools in the county produced by government league table of raw scores with that based on their mean GCSE points score. Two rank orders are shown for comparison. The first is based on the initial sample of those twenty schools which provided examination results. The second is based on the final sample of eighteen schools for which there are full data. The differences are a result of the changed sample, which arises from the deletion of missing cases. While the top and bottom of the rankings are very similar under all three methods of calculation, there is considerable change in the centre. This is explained, in part, by the small range of scores shared by the majority of schools so that small changes in the sample and, therefore, in the aggregated score produce marked changes in ranking.

The ranking of one of the two Catholic schools (school D) is affected when the mean GCSE points score is used as the basis of measurement instead of the percentage of pupils obtaining 5+ grades A-C. The two are ranked third and fourth with almost identical

records using the raw results, but school D moves from being fourth of twenty-one schools to sixth out of twenty based on the average points score of all the cases, and sixth of the eighteen schools included in the experimental sample.

Table IV

ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT - 1992 GCSE EXAMINATION RESULTS
IGNORING PUPIL BACKGROUND FACTORS

GOVERNMENT		INITIAL SAMPLE			EXPERIMENTAL SAMPLE		
RAW RESULTS		POINTS SCORE - ALL PUPILS			POINTS SCORE - VALID CASES		
IN RANK ORDER	ROLL	RANK	MEAN	ROLL	RANK	MEAN	ROLL
SCHOOL A	180	1	40.33	180	1	40.36	174
SCHOOL B	183	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
SCHOOL C	150	2	40.09	150	2	40.26	136
SCHOOL D	230	6	32.87	231	6	33.23	155
SCHOOL E	142	8	32.53	140	9	30.91	107
SCHOOL F	177	5	33.11	180	3	33.38	153
SCHOOL G	197	4	33.51	203	4	33.32	177
SCHOOL H	160	7	32.77	161	7	32.77	111
SCHOOL I	156	3	33.57	157	n/a	n/a	n/a
SCHOOL J	171	10	30.56	167	10	30.27	146
SCHOOL K	166	15	27.77	168	13	28.22	154
SCHOOL L	142	12	29.48	143	11	28.94	130
SCHOOL M	287	11	29.55	288	8	30.97	264
SCHOOL N	209	13	28.82	208	n/a	n/a	n/a
SCHOOL O	155	14	28.14	154	12	28.54	124
SCHOOL P	152	9	32.44	151	5	33.31	124
SCHOOL Q	138	18	25.83	138	14	27.31	118
SCHOOL R	101	16	27.00	102	15	27.19	82
SCHOOL S	120	17	26.48	120	16	25.41	98
SCHOOL T	116	20	21.07	118	18	21.03	92
SCHOOL U	119	19	21.37	117	17	21.76	107
MEAN SCORE	164	n/a	30.36	n/a	n/a	30.40	n/a

The Differential Effect of Background Factors

When account is taken of some of the relevant pupil background factors, a clearer view is obtained of the effectiveness of individual schools. It would be expected that, if there were no school effects, the pupils' scores on measures of non-verbal reasoning and socio-economic status should be directly related to their mean GCSE points score. Table V,

however, suggests there may be some independent school effect though it also indicates there is likely to be a significant positive association for all eighteen schools in the sample. Overall, the correlation with non-verbal reasoning is higher ($r = 0.79$; $p < 0.001$) than with the socio-economic indicator ($r = 0.62$; $p < 0.01$). In the light of evidence about the importance of home background and intelligence upon levels of academic achievement the strong and statistically significant correlation between the mean GCSE points score and both background measures is to be expected.

Table V

AGGREGATED PUPIL DATA: MEAN SCORES - YEAR 11 - 1991/92

SCHOOL CODE	GCSE POINTS n=a		NON-VERBAL DH n=a		SOCIO ECONOMIC n=b		SAMPLE n = a/n = b
	Mean	Std. Dev.	Mean	Std. Dev.	Mean	Std. Dev.	
SCHOOL A	40.36	14.79	113.16	11.98	3.75	1.29	174/169
SCHOOL B	n/a		n/a		n/a		n/a
SCHOOL C	40.26	15.42	110.68	13.42	2.85	1.42	136/133
SCHOOL D	33.23	15.48	114.47	12.55	4.54	1.56	155/145
SCHOOL E	30.91	17.62	106.07	13.95	3.64	1.06	107/101
SCHOOL F	33.38	14.26	113.09	13.08	3.07	1.21	153/136
SCHOOL G	33.32	14.93	108.54	12.65	3.82	1.41	177/164
SCHOOL H	32.77	16.93	106.01	13.28	2.87	1.27	111/106
SCHOOL I	n/a		n/a		n/a		n/a
SCHOOL J	30.27	17.21	108.54	12.14	2.72	1.44	146/145
SCHOOL K	28.22	16.75	105.43	13.99	1.91	0.95	154/154
SCHOOL L	28.94	17.51	106.22	13.51	2.48	1.31	130/126
SCHOOL M	30.97	15.79	106.31	12.31	2.65	1.13	264/244
SCHOOL N	n/a		n/a		n/a		n/a
SCHOOL O	28.54	14.70	107.43	12.05	3.86	1.26	124/118
SCHOOL P	33.31	11.97	108.37	12.59	3.39	1.18	124/122
SCHOOL Q	27.31	17.07	107.26	13.94	2.97	1.03	118/116
SCHOOL R	27.19	15.74	104.35	10.77	2.76	1.62	82/78
SCHOOL S	25.41	14.92	106.87	13.41	2.23	1.16	98/91
SCHOOL T	21.03	14.01	103.05	12.24	1.66	0.87	92/90
SCHOOL U	21.76	14.90	101.34	12.56	1.99	1.01	107/97
MEAN SCORE	30.40	n/a	107.62	n/a	2.95	n/a	n/a

A direct comparison of the final sample of eighteen schools using a one-way analysis of variance showed no significant differences at the .05 level (Scheffe) between their mean

scores on any of the three measures. Given the clustering of scores, this is perhaps to be expected. The box and whisker plot of the non-verbal reasoning scores (Figure 2) shows a small range (range = 13.0) and standard deviation (s.d. = 3.44). The sample is noticeably skewed towards the bottom of the range (skewness = 0.51) and all cases are within the sector delineating one standard deviation from the mean on a normal distribution curve.

Figure 2

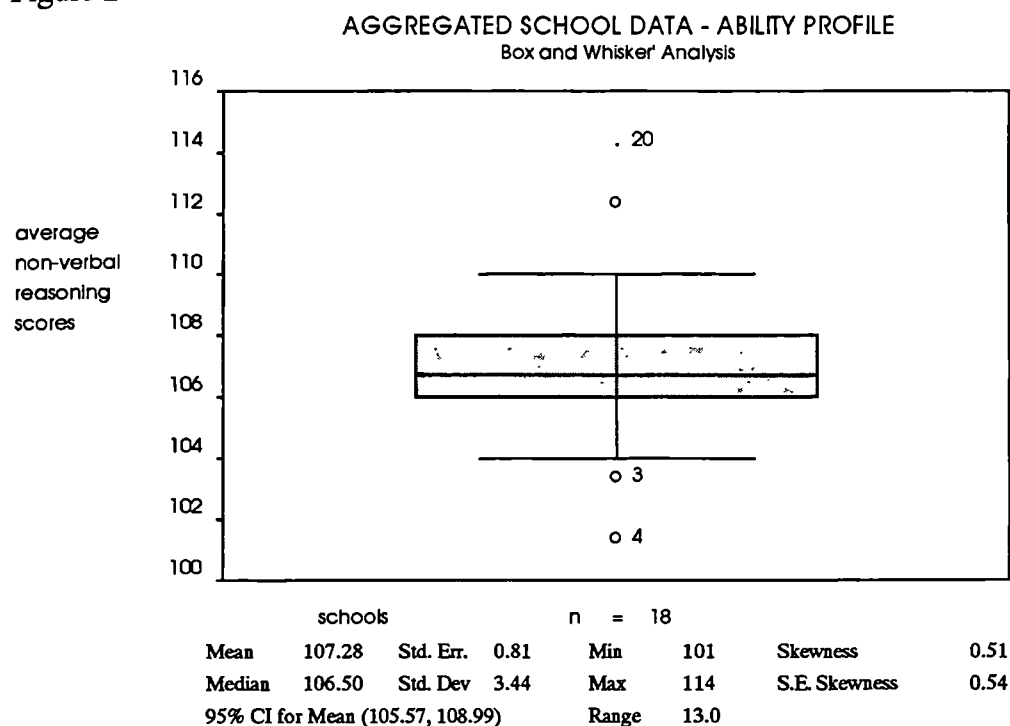


Figure 3 shows the plot for the measure of socio-economic status. The distribution on the eight point scale is limited (range = 2.91). The sample is again skewed, but less noticeably, towards the more disadvantaged social groups (skewness = 0.21). The data suggest that the schools form a relatively homogeneous sample. However, there are also indicate real educational differences between them. For example, pupils attending schools A and C, on average, obtained the equivalent of eight GCSE examinations at grade C. That is twice the number achieved by pupils at schools T and U. The average value of pupils' homes in school D lies somewhere in the middle of the range covered by council tax bands 4 and 5.

It represents a property worth approximately £98,000 based on the capital valuation at 1st April 1991. The home of the average pupil attending school T is in the middle between bands 1 and 2 and has a value of approximately £46,000 (Department of the Environment, 1992). Such differences tend to be associated with very distinct pupil populations having particular characteristics, attitudes and levels of attainment.

Figure 3

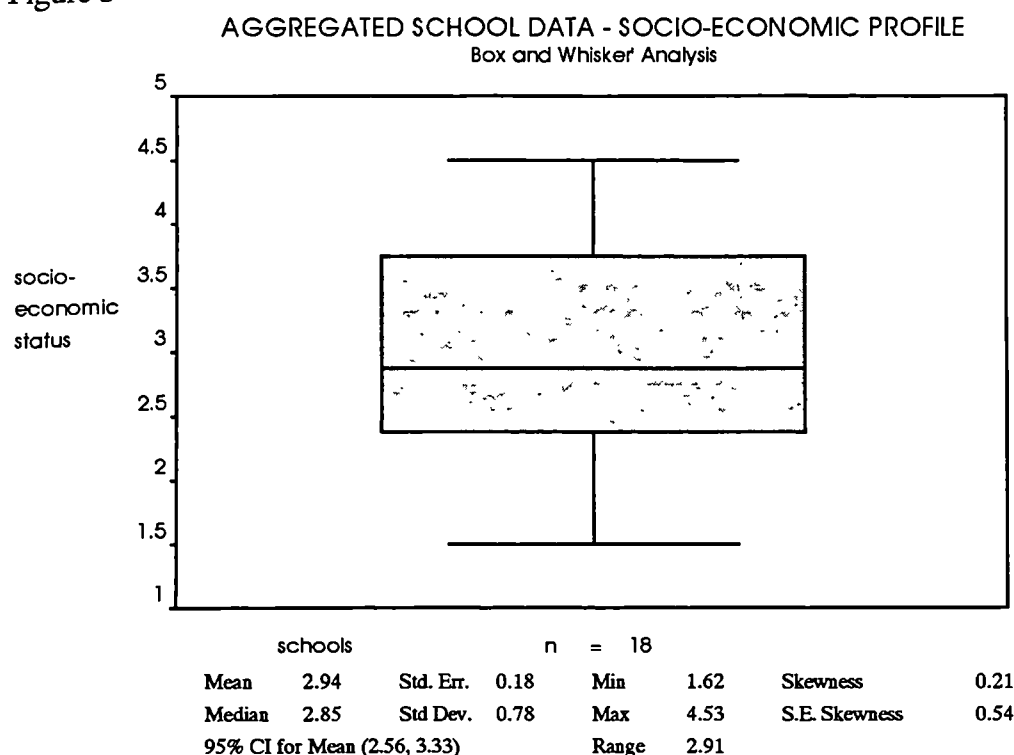


Table V also suggests that there may be specific school effects causing very different levels of academic achievement by schools whose pupils have very similar background characteristics. A same conclusion may be drawn when almost identical mean GCSE points scores are achieved by schools having pupils with very different backgrounds. It would be expected that two schools with similar populations would achieve comparable results as, for example, do schools G and P. However, pupils attending schools A and C achieve almost identical mean scores yet have noticeably different backgrounds, and both

have higher levels of examination success than school D whose pupils have the highest average non-verbal test scores and socio-economic status of all those in the sample.

Academic Achievement and Non-Verbal Reasoning

Pupils non-verbal reasoning scores are used as surrogate measure of academic ability.

They can also be regarded as an indicator of prior ability. If schools have a majority of

Table VI

SCHOOL CHARACTERISTICS - NON-VERBAL REASONING

NFER DH REASONING	SCHOOL A		SCHOOL C		SCHOOL D		SCHOOL E		SCHOOL F		SCHOOL G	
	%	Cum%	%	Cum%	%	Cum%	%	Cum%	%	Cum%	%	Cum%
BELOW 70	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
70 - 84	1.1	1.1	2.9	2.9	0.0	0.0	8.4	8.4	2.0	2.0	2.3	2.3
85 - 99	12.1	13.2	16.2	19.1	11.0	11.0	22.4	30.8	14.3	16.3	20.9	23.2
100 - 114	40.8	54.0	40.5	59.6	36.7	47.7	40.2	71.0	37.9	54.2	47.4	70.6
115 - 129	36.8	90.8	29.4	89.0	41.3	89.0	22.5	93.5	36.0	90.2	23.2	93.8
ABOVE 130	9.2	100	11.0	100	11.0	100	6.5	100	9.8	100	6.2	100
NFER DH REASONING	SCHOOL H		SCHOOL J		SCHOOL K		SCHOOL L		SCHOOL M		SCHOOL O	
	%	Cum%	%	Cum%	%	Cum%	%	Cum%	%	Cum%	%	Cum%
BELOW 70	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
70 - 84	6.3	6.3	2.1	2.1	11.0	11.0	5.4	5.4	4.2	4.2	1.6	1.6
85 - 99	27.0	33.3	23.2	25.3	21.5	32.5	28.4	33.8	24.2	28.4	25.8	27.4
100 - 114	36.1	69.4	43.2	68.5	39.6	72.1	37.7	71.5	48.1	76.5	46.0	73.4
115 - 129	28.8	98.2	28.1	96.6	26.0	98.1	25.4	96.9	20.5	97.0	22.6	96.0
ABOVE 130	1.8	100	3.4	100	1.9	100	3.1	100	3.0	100	4.0	100
NFER DH REASONING	SCHOOL P		SCHOOL Q		SCHOOL R		SCHOOL S		SCHOOL T		SCHOOL U	
	%	Cum%	%	Cum%	%	Cum%	%	Cum%	%	Cum%	%	Cum%
BELOW 70	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
70 - 84	3.2	3.2	4.2	4.2	3.7	3.7	6.1	6.1	4.3	4.3	10.3	10.3
85 - 99	25.8	29.0	27.2	31.4	30.4	34.1	25.5	31.6	33.7	38.0	34.6	44.9
100 - 114	38.7	67.7	38.1	69.5	47.6	81.7	38.8	70.4	42.4	80.4	39.2	84.1
115 - 129	28.3	96.0	22.9	92.4	18.3	100	25.5	95.9	18.5	98.9	13.1	97.2
ABOVE 130	4.0	100	7.6	100	0.0	100	4.1	100	1.1	100	2.8	100

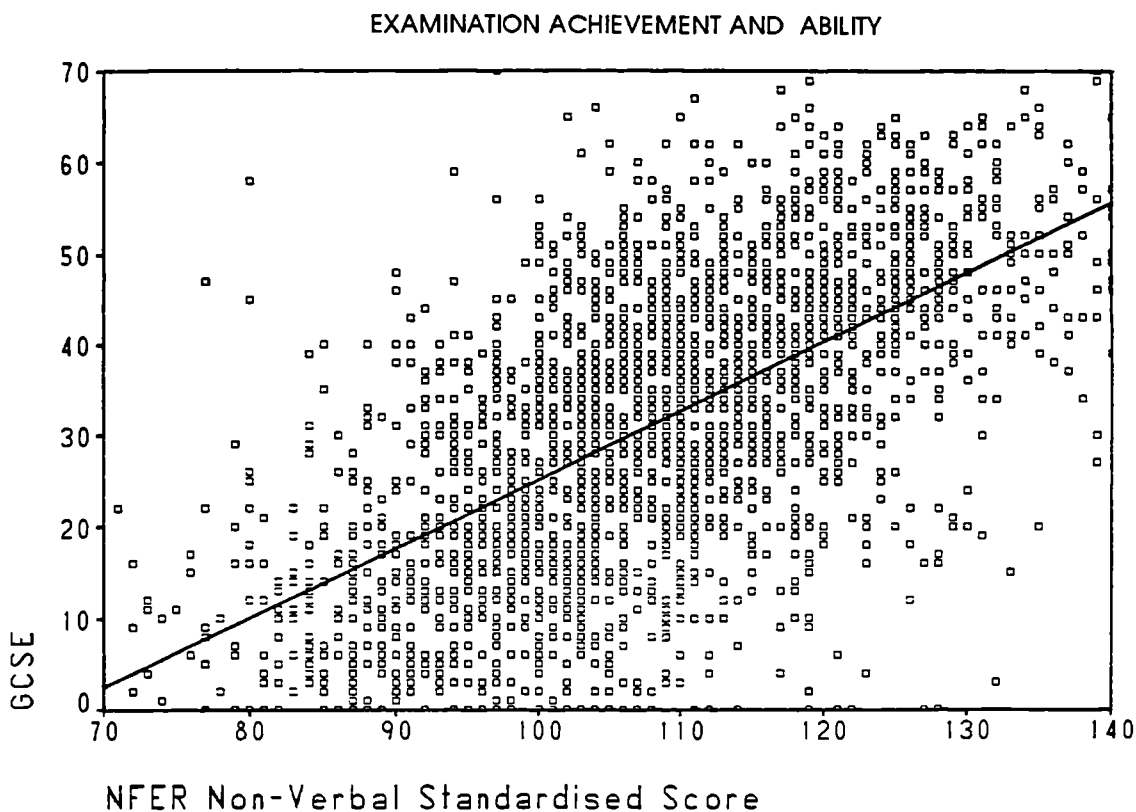
high or low scoring pupils, one would expect it to be reflected in the overall level of academic achievement. Table VI illustrates the extent to which school populations differ in academic ability. For example, while school D has over fifty per cent of its pupils having

verbal reasoning scores of 115 or above, almost forty-five per cent of the pupils attending School U score below 100.

The correlation between verbal reasoning and GCSE achievement across the whole sample ($n = 2452$) illustrated in figure 4 suggests a significant relationship ($r = 0.61$; $P < .001$).

The regression coefficient ($r^2 = 0.38$) indicates that thirty-eight per cent of the variation in the GCSE points score can be accounted for by pupils' verbal reasoning.

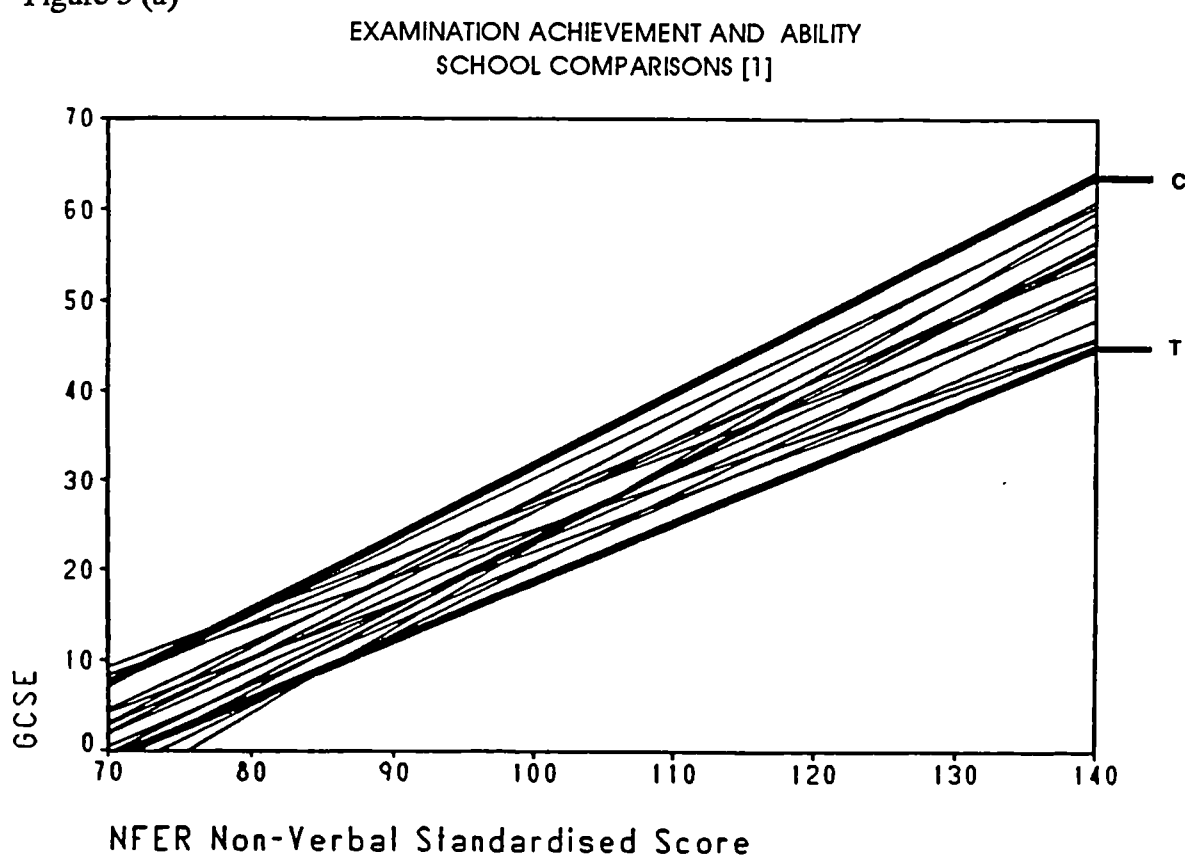
Figure 4



The regression line showing the performance of the average pupil in figure 4 can be used to compare the achievement of any individual against that county average. However, that does not tell us anything about an individual school's achievements. To do so, regression lines are calculated for each school population and are then superimposed. This enables a comparison of overall school performance to be made and also to compare school effects

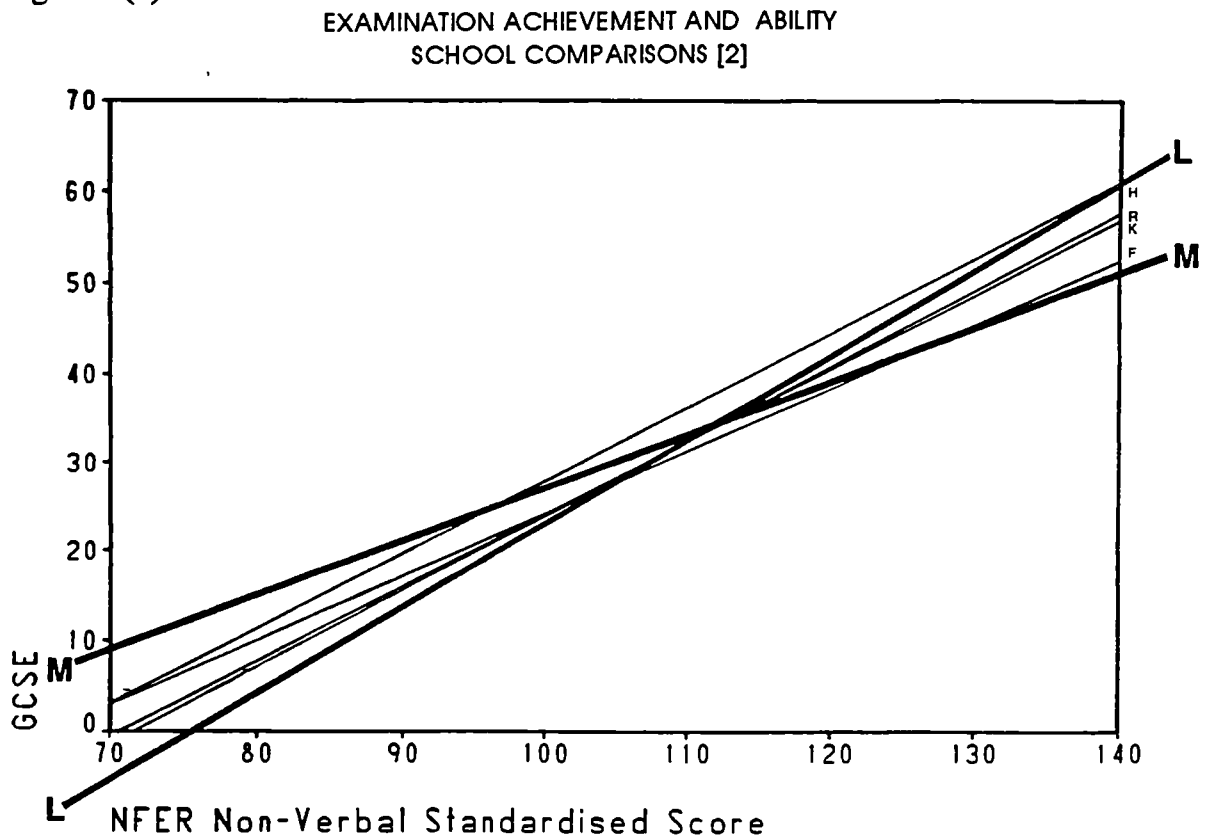
on pupils in different ability ranges as illustrated in figure 5 (a). While it shows most schools clustered around a central axis, some are clearly performing much better or worse than the majority. For example, by emphasising their respective school regression lines, it can be seen that pupils at school C have higher average GCSE scores at all levels of non-verbal reasoning than school T, with the differential widening steadily with increases in the non-verbal score.

Figure 5 (a)



The regression lines of some schools cross indicating that some appear to achieve better results with pupils with low non-verbal reasoning but not as well with pupils having higher scores. This can be seen in the comparison of schools L and M in a simplified diagram of just six schools in figure 5 (b). The steeper regression line slope of school L indicates that, for their pupils, a relatively small increase in verbal reasoning is associated with a large increase in examination achievement.

Figure 5 (b)



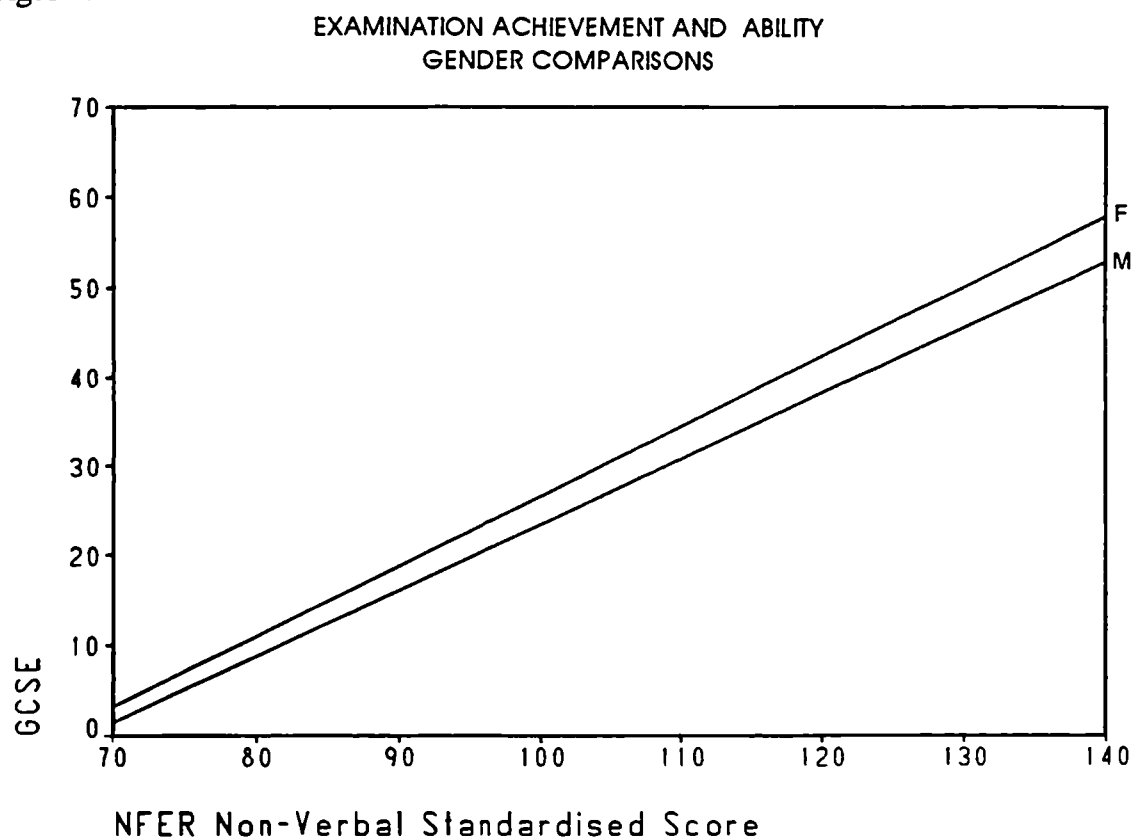
This approach is more open to chance variations than some of the other methods, but takes most account of the differences between schools. One problem with this form of institutional comparison is that the distribution of academic ability/prior ability may differ considerably from school to school and, consequently, it may not be possible to say that one school is performing better than another, merely that for some groups of pupils it does (Birnbaum, 1993). However, it has been strongly argued that schools do, in fact, have differential effects and that it is not simply an artefact of the chosen analytical method (Nuttall, 1990).

Sex Differences and Academic Achievement

Using the single variable of intelligence, as measured by the Non-verbal DH test, it can be seen that girls on average obtain a higher GCSE points score than boys at all levels. The achievement gap increasing the higher their level of non-verbal reasoning. The regression

line for the county illustrated in figure 4 hides gender differences in performance. When the regression lines are calculated for each sex separately, it can be seen that girls perform better than boys at all levels. Figure 6 shows the separate regression lines for each sex superimposed, with the individual scores omitted for clarity. While the differences are not large, they are consistent across the sample and will have an effect on the aggregated school performance depending upon the gender split in any particular school and need to be included as a factor in any inter-school comparison.

Figure 6



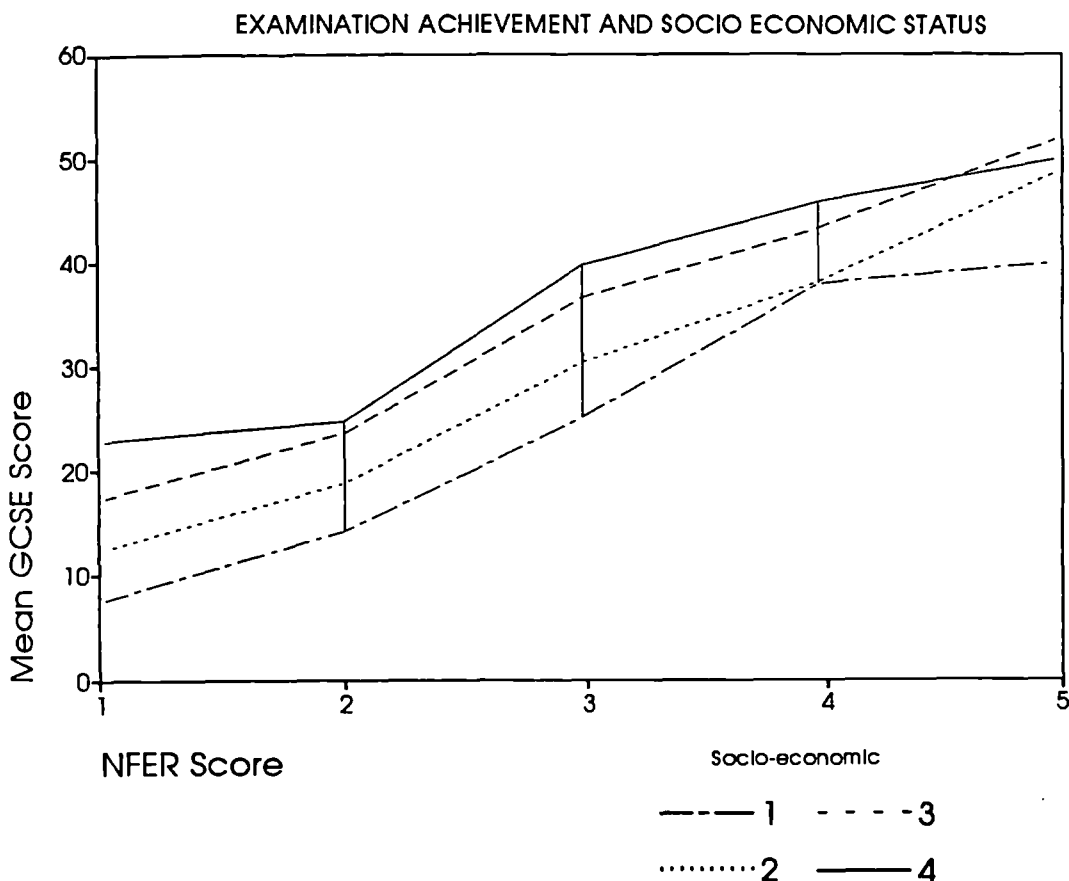
Achievement and Socio-Economic status

I amalgamated the eight council tax bands used as a surrogate for socio-economic status into four groups. The correlation between the mean GCSE points score and pupils' social background measured in this way is not as strong as when using the full scale ($r = 0.41$; p

< 0.001). The regression coefficient suggests that sixteen per cent of the variance can be explained by social class differences.

Comparisons of the performance of pupils of similar ability in the four socio-economic sub-groups are illustrated in figure 7. The mean GCSE points score of each socio-economic groups was plotted for the five ability bands. Overall, there is a noticeable gap between the achievement levels of the most and less socially advantaged groups. However, it is not entirely consistent. For pupils with a non-verbal reasoning score of 70-129, the higher the social status the higher the level of achievement. But pupils with non-verbal reasoning scores above 130 in the top socio-economic group do not continue to show the same superiority, being overtaken by the second group and almost caught by the third. The 'achievement gap' is only maintained over the most disadvantaged pupils.

Figure 7



Overall School Differences

The influence of pupil characteristics on examination results has been discussed above.

Table VII (i) shows the distribution of verbal reasoning scores in the eight Council Tax Bands and table VII (ii) condensed into four socio-economic sub-groups as I determined.

Table VII (i)

PUPIL DISTRIBUTION BY SOCIAL STATUS & ABILITY						
Eight groups by five sub-groups (n = 2335)						
T A X B A N D S	A	26	133	158	58	7
	B	34	146	220	105	15
	C	30	148	308	181	37
	D	2	70	156	139	28
	E	3	21	67	71	16
	F	1	9	41	38	14
	G	1	5	18	20	8
	H	0	0	0	1	0
		1	2	3	4	5
NON-VERBAL REASONING						

Table VII (ii)

PUPIL DISTRIBUTION BY SOCIAL STATUS & ABILITY						
Four sub-groups by five sub-groups (n = 2335)						
S O C I O E C O N O M I C	1	26	133	158	58	7
	2	64	294	528	286	52
	3	5	91	223	210	44
	4	2	14	59	59	22
		1	2	3	4	5
NON-VERBAL REASONING						

Sub-group 1 = Tax Band A; Sub-group 2 = Tax Bands B + C; Sub-group 3 = Tax Bands D + E; Sub-group 4 = Tax Bands F + G + H

The extent to which schools differ from the county pattern will have an effect on the overall level of achievement. A school with the majority of its pupils in low achieving categories is likely to have a lower mean GCSE points score than the county average. Tables VIII (i) and (ii) illustrate two of the schools in the sample having very different pupil profiles.

Table VIII (i)

PUPIL DISTRIBUTION BY SOCIAL STATUS & ABILITY

SCHOOL COMPARISON

SCHOOL T [n = 90; m = 51, f = 39]

		PERCENTAGE OF PUPILS BY GENDER									
		M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
S C O O L E	1	0.0	2.6	17.6	25.6	19.6	30.8	9.8	7.7	2.0	0.0
	2	2.0	5.1	11.8	15.4	19.6	10.3	13.7	2.6	0.0	0.0
	3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.0	0.0	2.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	4	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
		1		2		3		4		5	
NON-VERBAL REASONING											

Table VIII (ii)

SCHOOL D [n = 145; m = 77, f = 68]

		PERCENTAGE OF PUPILS BY GENDER									
		M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
S C O O L E	1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.9	0.0	2.9	0.0	0.0
	2	0.0	0.0	2.6	7.4	11.7	11.8	6.5	2.9	2.6	0.0
	3	0.0	0.0	5.2	1.5	16.9	7.4	14.3	32.4	5.2	4.4
	4	0.0	0.0	3.9	0.0	10.4	11.8	13.0	13.2	7.8	1.5
		1		2		3		4		5	
NON-VERBAL REASONING											

School Differences Using a Multi-level Model Analysis

By adding gender differences in achievement to those associated both with academic ability and socio-economic status, and by taking them all into account, a model is built of

the expected academic performance of each individual in the sample based on the actual points score achieved by all pupils having similar background characteristics. The comparison of pupils' actual score against the modelled expected score gives an indication of the school effect. The correlation between the two variables across the sample is high ($n = 18$; $r = 0.79$). The regression coefficient ($r^2 = 0.62$) suggests that sixty-two per cent of the variation between schools can be explained by the factors comprising the modelled expected mean school GCSE points score. For most schools their actual performance would be round about what one would expect given their particular pupils. Table IX

Table IX

SCHOOL PERFORMANCE - ACADEMIC EFFECTIVENESS

SCHOOL	ROLL	GCSE POINTS-TOTAL		GCSE POINTS-MEAN		DIFF. +/- SCH. MEAN
		EXPECTED	ACTUAL	EXPECTED	ACTUAL	
SCHOOL A	169	6204.63	6852	36.71	40.54	3.83
SCHOOL B	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
SCHOOL C	133	4326.64	5348	32.53	40.21	7.68
SCHOOL D	145	5643.50	4843	38.92	33.40	-5.52
SCHOOL E	101	3228.05	3116	31.96	30.85	-1.11
SCHOOL F	136	4675.99	4600	34.38	33.82	-0.56
SCHOOL G	164	5511.11	5525	33.60	33.69	0.09
SCHOOL H	106	3124.16	3439	29.47	32.44	2.97
SCHOOL I	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
SCHOOL J	145	4399.00	4416	30.34	30.46	0.12
SCHOOL K	154	4186.01	4346	27.18	28.22	1.04
SCHOOL L	126	3678.34	3643	29.19	28.91	-0.28
SCHOOL M	244	7280.28	7637	29.84	31.30	1.46
SCHOOL N	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
SCHOOL O	118	3900.38	3391	33.05	28.74	-4.31
SCHOOL P	122	3907.28	4097	32.03	33.58	1.55
SCHOOL Q	116	3567.30	3176	30.75	27.38	-3.37
SCHOOL R	78	2175.71	2153	27.89	27.60	-0.29
SCHOOL S	91	2580.61	2343	28.36	25.75	-2.61
SCHOOL T	90	2187.00	1881	24.30	20.90	-3.4
SCHOOL U	97	2393.01	2163	24.67	22.30	-2.37

shows the comparison as a total GCSE points score and as a mean score for each school. It also gives the difference between its expected and actual mean score. It is only when the

difference between the two results is large that it can be said that a school appears to be particularly effective, or ineffective, in helping its pupils achieve academic success.

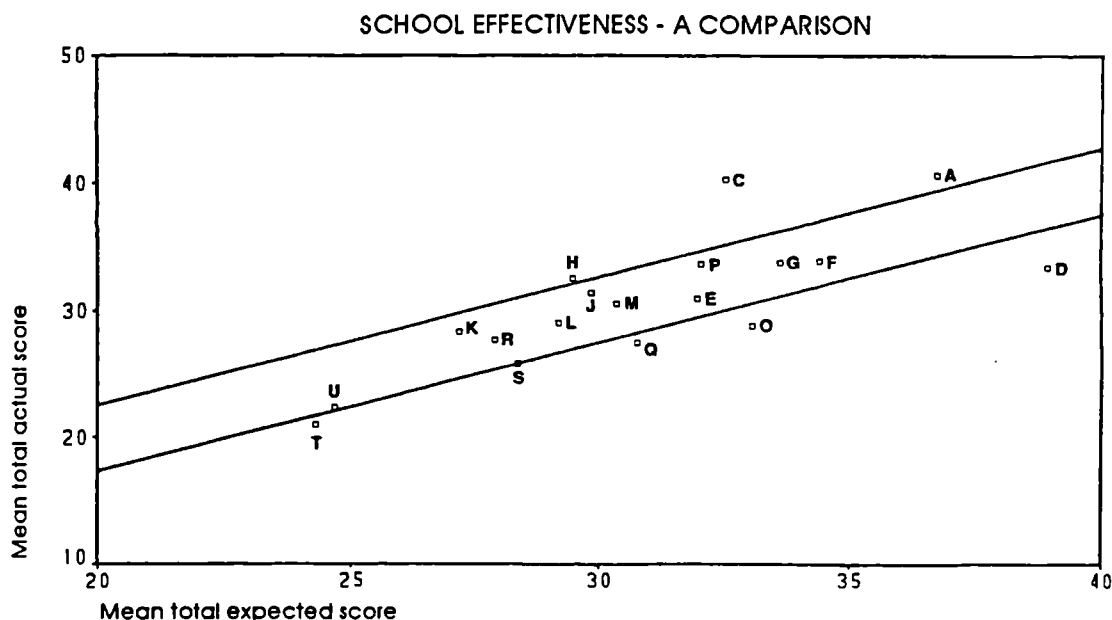
Following the approach taken by a similar county education authority using this method of school comparison, the definition of 'large' was taken to be any difference more than 2.5 examination points than that predicted by the model (Jesson et al, 1992; Jesson & Gray, 1993). While such a difference is not particularly large in itself, within a band of 2.5 points either side of the mean will be schools whose mean score differ by five points at the extreme. This represents a potential difference of one subject at grade C for each pupil, on average, depending upon which school they attend. For any schools outside the band the differences are, of course, greater and represent a significant real differential in examination achievement for their pupils.

Figure 8 shows a graph of the mean examination points score for each school plotted against their expected score derived from the model. The schools within the parallel lines represent those where the difference between their actual mean score and expected mean score differ by less than 2.5 examination points. They can be regarded as doing as well as can be expected with their particular pupils. Schools above the line can be regarded as performing much better than expected, those below worse than expected. Figure 8 shows that the majority of schools (eleven of the eighteen) are performing as expected. It also identifies three schools who are achieving better than expected, one noticeably so, and four whose performance might give rise to concern.

The degree to which schools over or under perform is indicated by the distance they are from the band measured in a vertical direction. The greater the distance, the more (or less) effective the school. The school which is academically most effective, given the background of its pupils, is School C. The least effective is School D. *Both* are Catholic

schools with almost identical examination results based on the measure for comparison chosen by the government (see table III).

Figure 8



Pupils in those schools which achieved examination performance levels in excess of 2.5 GCSE points compared to their expected score averaged an additional 4.8 points, with a maximum in school C of 7.68 points. The average increase represents almost the equivalent of one examination at grade C, or the difference of one grade in five subjects. In those schools that performed below expectations, the average deficit was 4.15 points per pupil with a maximum of 5.52 points in school D. The gap between the most and least academically effective school is over 13 points. For pupils of the similar ability and social background this represents, on average, a difference of two grades on a range of six examinations or the equivalent of two additional examinations, one grade A, one grade B.

But What Does It All Mean?

Though the focus of my research is academic attainment, 'good' examination results are just one of several pupil outcomes resulting from the years of secondary education.

However, they are regarded by most commentators as one important indication of an effective school, when 'effective' is used as an overall description of the desirable results that society expects of its educational system. Certainly, schools are unlikely to set out deliberately to achieve a level of examination success well below that of which their pupils are capable. On the other hand, examination results based on a single year, as is the case with this study, must be treated with caution if they are used to identify academically successful schools. They provide a single snapshot only and can give no indication whether the school is generally and consistently effective with different groups of pupils, nor can it predict whether the level of examination performance is likely to be sustained. A longitudinal study is required to provide such information. Only when such data are available can investigations of the causal factors associated with school effectiveness be undertaken with real confidence.

Different forms of analysis have their own strengths and weaknesses. The approach I have taken is relatively unsophisticated and has limited objectives. The primary concern is to identify schools which may be particularly effective in helping their pupils achieve examination success compared to similar pupils attending other schools. My results show real differences in the levels of overall school performance within the county. Though not statistically significant, the magnitude of the differences between the schools' academic effectiveness performance had a noticeable impact on Year 11 pupils in 1992, which, if replicated with future cohorts, would have important implications for the local authority, individual schools and for parents and their children, since the choice parents make about which school their child attends may affect the level of their examination achievements.

It was expected that the findings would confirm indications from other research, that pupils in Catholic schools achieve, on average, better examination results than those attending non-Catholic schools. It was also expected that it would confirm the high level

of academic effectiveness of Catholic schools shown by Jesson's studies for Nottinghamshire County Council. *This was not the case.* When background factors are taken into account, the results of the study show the two Catholic schools in the sample (schools C and D) at either extreme of the 'effectiveness spectrum' of the particular local authority. Since the study neither fully supports nor contradicts the findings of other researchers these results have to be interpreted carefully. They seem to give rise to more questions than answers.

The difference in the levels of academic effectiveness of the two Catholic schools is particularly noticeable in the light of their almost identical raw examination results. Given the differences in mean non-verbal reasoning and socio-economic scores, while it might be expected that school C would probably be quite effective, it was not expected that school D would be so ineffective.

At this stage, possible reasons for the differences between the two Catholic schools are speculative and will form the basis for further research. The results may simply be a function of the analytical methods I have used or of the chosen sample. ✓

The local authority has a combination of various types of school in its separate administrative areas. This form of organisation may affect the character of those schools deemed comprehensive. While officers of the county feel that the organisation of the different areas ensures 'pure' systems operate within them, it has been argued that it is impossible to have comprehensive and selective systems running concurrently within a single authority (Boyson, 1969). Consequently, though the sample represents just over ninety-five per cent of the comprehensive schools within the authority, the degree to which these findings can be generalised to other local authorities or individual schools without further investigation is, therefore, limited.

The overall sample of eighteen schools is relatively small. The even smaller sample of Catholic schools may be completely unrepresentative of such institutions. It could be the case that the study simply highlights academically sound schools, the most successful of which happens to be Catholic, against others including a very much poorer Catholic school. The apparent effectiveness, or ineffectiveness of the two Catholic institutions may have nothing to do with their denominational character.

This part of my study does not indicate any causal factors for the differences noted between the schools or that might account for the unexpected results of the two Catholic schools. Other research projects point to specific school process as reasons for similar observed differential effects in achievement. How far this may be the case in the circumstances of this research requires further investigation.

Conclusion

Despite the contradictory nature of the findings, this short study does add to the accumulating evidence about the academic effectiveness of Catholic schools. When set against the limited background evidence, and the caveats I have mentioned, the polarity of performance shown by the two Catholic schools is particularly interesting. A more detailed comparison of their relative academic performance and a case study of their prevailing ethos may tell us more about factors that encourage the development of academically effective Catholic schools, and enable the investigation to go beyond that narrow focus to consider other aspects of their claimed distinctive nature that may be associated with their level of academic achievement.

Summary

This section of my research involved a comparison of twenty comprehensive schools in one local education authority. It uses a simple multi-level model as the main form of

analysis. After taking background variables into account, the study finds real differences in the academic effectiveness of schools. The most and least effective in the survey are both Catholic schools.

Bryk et al (1993) argue that the academic superiority of Catholic schools in the USA is related to their Catholicity. In other words it is something more than simply good pedagogical practice that is responsible for the observed school effect. The extent to which that may be the case in respect of the two Catholic comprehensive schools in the investigation above will be considered in the chapters comprising the second section of this study.

The following chapters extend the comparison of the two Catholic schools. I will use a case study approach for the investigation, in which I will compare their relative performance on a range of outcome measures in addition to levels of pupils' examination achievements. I will consider the nature and purpose of Catholic education and the ways in which the two schools implement their understanding of it in the light of their local circumstances, seeking to identify any major differences in school ethos or Catholicity that may be factors associated with their differing levels of academic effectiveness.

SECTION TWO

CATHOLIC EDUCATION: CONCEPTS AND CASES

The first three chapters of the last section reviewed the literature concerning academic effectiveness, the relative importance of home and school influences and, in particular, the evidence which points to the relative academic success of Catholic schools compared to similar non-Catholic institutions. Most of the empirical research that is specifically focused on the performance Catholic schools originates in the USA. Consequently, chapter 4 reported the results of my comparative study of schools in one shire county in England.

The literature reviewed in chapter 3 indicates that pupils who attend Catholic schools achieve, on average, higher levels of examination success than similar pupils attending non-Catholic schools. However, my findings reported in chapter 4, based on a small sample of schools ($n = 18$), found the two Catholic schools at the extreme ends of the effectiveness spectrum. The conflicting results led to the following broad working hypotheses:

- *Differences between schools in the USA and England prevent extrapolation from one Catholic system to the other.*
- *Catholic schools are academically effective. The very ineffective school in my sample is an anomaly. Its ineffectiveness has no connection with its Catholic nature.*
- *The principles of Catholic education can be interpreted and implemented in different ways only some of which may be supportive of academic achievement.*

I have adopted the last of those hypotheses as the basis for this section of my study. In doing so I am concerned with the conditions that may contribute to the academic effectiveness of Catholic schools that is suggested in the literature and partly confirmed by the findings reported in chapter 4.

The first chapter in this section, chapter 5, sets the theoretical framework within which my hypothesis will be investigated, highlighting factors that contribute to academic effectiveness in Catholic schools. The following two chapters compare the two Catholic schools in my sample, using a case-study approach, to illustrate those aspects of their activities that appear to support or militate against academic effectiveness. My primary concern is to understand and explain their interpretation and implementation of Catholic education in as much as it helps pupils achieve highly in GCSE examinations. I am not concerned with value judgements of the quality of the education provided in the two schools. In other words, I am concerned with its effectiveness, not whether it is good.

It is the view of the Catholic Church that it has an obligation to support parents, the child's prime educators, by providing schools in which the whole lives of children will be influenced and inspired by the spirit of Christ. It makes the claim both as a social and a religious organisation:

"Education is ... the concern of the Church, not only because the Church must be recognised as a human society capable of imparting education, but especially [as] it has the duty of proclaiming the way of salvation to all men, of revealing the life of Christ to those who believe, and of assisting them with unremitting care so that they may be able to attain the fullness of life"

(Gravissimum Educationis, 1965, para. 3).

The Church claims its schools should meet the needs of young people "illuminated by the Gospel message" (Baum, 1988), that is, in the light of its collective Christian faith. Its claim for authority to educate also derives from its faith in Jesus of Nazareth and his exhortation to his followers to proclaim his message. Integral to such a stance are beliefs about the nature of the universe and the role and purpose of humanity within it.

In his address to the 1995 Catholic Education Service National Conference on Education, Cardinal Basil Hume reaffirmed the traditional aim of the Catholic Church in England to

provide a place at a Catholic school for every Catholic child. He highlighted the three interdependent and complementary elements of home, parish and school on which Catholic education is built, stressing that "schools cannot be expected to inculcate what is ignored or denied in the home" (Catholic Media Office, Briefing: Education Special, June, 1995).

While poor teaching may be a cause of school failure, it might also be caused by a mismatch between the values of the school and the people in the locality it serves, whether they be religious or secular. Michael Duane, the headteacher of Risinghill Comprehensive school, whose closure in 1965 was at the centre of a widely reported national debate, considered the school itself to be a community (Berg, 1986, p. 279) but recognised that "you cannot educate against the climate of opinion or attitude in the family, the neighbourhood or society" (Berg, 1968, p. 148). In a discussion document prepared for the staff, he outlined what he saw as the many difficulties that they faced in implementing his vision for the school. These included, among others:

"A locality where a large number of parents are antagonistic to the values and purposes represented by the school" (Berg, 1968, p. 283).

"The continued rejection by so many of the children of the moral, ethical, cultural, linguistic and other standards accepted as fundamental by most teachers ... They think and feel in terms of their upbringing and of the standards set by those most dear to them, their parents" (Berg, 1968, p. 284-5).

Clearly, the cultural context of schools, together with the implicit and explicit values involved, cannot be ignored as a factor in their effectiveness (Burgess, 1980). In the case of Catholic schools in England those factors are rooted in a particular religious world view. Religious faith is not just belief, but should express itself in action and a way of life. Theology is rooted in that faith but aims at verbal expression. It can be argued that:

"... if we are to reach any understanding of the foundations of faith and theology, it might seem that we must seek it through a study of man in whom alone (as far as we know) the phenomena of faith and theology show themselves ... Any attempt to say what faith is and to present its claims as not just arbitrary must proceed from the common ground of a shared humanity so that faith can be seen as something that is rooted in the very constitution of our human existence"

(Macquarrie, 1966, p. 53).

That human existence of which Macquarrie writes includes, for the Catholic Church, a belief that humans are by nature religious beings (Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1994, paras. 27, 28). Catholic schools, therefore, have been regarded as religious institutions. The normal and expected pattern of Catholic education in England and Wales has, since the mid-1850s, been that of schools to which the Catholic community has sent their children to be educated in the Catholic faith by Catholic teachers. Consequently, chapter five, the first part of this section, explores the concepts of community, culture and social cohesion as they relate to Catholic education. I argue that the particular nature and culture of the Catholic community, together with the forms of social control that are consequently available to the teachers in its Catholic schools, play a major role in developing and sustaining their cohesiveness as social institutions. I argue further that there are particular elements inherent to the Catholic community that contribute to a congruity of purpose between school, parents and pupils which is essential for effective religious and academic education.

However, it is not the case that all Catholic schools are effective in meeting their religious or academic goals. Further, it is acknowledged by the Church that there is no single universal model of a Catholic school (Gravissimum Educationis, 1965, para. 9). Chapters 6 and 7, therefore, investigate connections between particular models of Catholic school and differences in academic effectiveness using the two schools which formed part of the sample studied in chapter four. These schools should be regarded as significant

embodiments of the different approaches to Catholic education most commonly found in England. One looks mainly inward and sees its role as primarily meeting the religious needs of its local Catholic population. Non-Catholic pupils are admitted on the assumption that they will be integrated as fully as possible into its Catholic life. The other takes the view that it should look outward to serve a much wider community comprising Catholics, Christians of other denominations, people of other faiths and those of none. The different approaches can be characterised as representing, on the one hand, a 'School for Catholics' and, on the other, a 'Catholic School' (Drake, 1995). Further, the two institutions can be seen as conforming to different models of Catholic school, the 'holistic' or 'traditional' and the 'pluralistic' or 'progressive', each with its concomitant and distinctive policies, practices and values (Arthur, 1995).

Both can be said to provide Catholic education, but in different ways and in different contexts. It is recognised that both approaches can be legitimate responses to local needs in our pluralistic and multi-faith society, but the adoption of either model brings with it different tensions and difficulties (Bishops Conference of England & Wales, November, 1994). The nature of those difficulties and the influence they have on the nature and effectiveness of a Catholic school are the focus of chapter 7. Specifically, they are set against the common cultural heritage of Catholic schools and the communities they serve as outlined in the first chapter of this section.

Any consideration of effectiveness requires specific aims against which performance can be measured. Although my interest is in academic effectiveness, the thrust of my argument is that there are elements inherent to the nature and purpose of Catholic education that can, but do not necessarily, provide conditions that are particularly supportive of academic achievement. Those elements derive from the nature and purpose of Catholic education which, the Church claims, has a distinctive character. I argue that there is a causal

association between the academic effectiveness of a Catholic school and the adoption of policies that achieve the objectives of Catholic socialisation.

CHAPTER 5

COMMUNITY, CULTURE AND SOCIAL COHESION: THE DISTINCTIVE NATURE OF CATHOLIC EDUCATION

Introduction

Proponents of Catholic education claim their schools have a distinctive educational philosophy and purpose based on a religious understanding of the nature of humanity and upon their function supporting the role of the Catholic church in society. The basic principles of their role are outlined in the Declaration on Christian Education made at the Second Vatican Council of the Catholic Church some thirty years ago (*Gravissimum Educationis*, 1965). Some opponents, such as White, while rejecting the validity of using God as the basis on which human activity and education should rest, acknowledge that if schools do adopt Christianity as a rationale for their educational aims, such a religious stance must, necessarily, impact upon the nature and style of the curriculum provided and the emphasis schools place on the purposes of the pupils' studies (White, 1982, pp. 76, 88, 89).

Barnard once observed that "an action is effective if it accomplishes its specific objective aim" (Barnard, 1938, p. 20). An understanding, therefore, of their purpose is a pre-requisite to evaluating the effectiveness of Catholic schools. While the Church claims a universal purpose for its schools, differing local circumstances will effect the ways in which those ends are pursued (*Gravissimum Educationis*, 1965, para. 9). In England, particularly in more recent years since the Second Vatican Council, differing models of Catholic school have been developed (McLaughlin et al, 1996) sometimes with diocesan approval but also, on occasions, contrary to the views and wishes of the Ordinary, albeit claiming the documents of the Council as justification (Caines, 1994; Murray, 1996).

Accordingly, any evaluation of the effectiveness of English maintained Catholic comprehensive schools must begin with an analysis of the historical and cultural context in which they have developed, including the theological principles upon which they are based. The official view is provided by Church approved documents. Because of an extensive use of quotations from them, there will be a number of technical terms used in my analysis, all of which will be explained in the text.

In addition to the official view, any analysis must also consider the changing social circumstances in England and the debate about the future of Catholic education within a multi-cultural and, increasingly, multi-faith but mainly secular society. The normal pattern of Catholic education in the decades since the Second Vatican Council (1964-67) has remained one of its schools serving the faith community. However, changing social circumstances in England in the past three decades, coupled with the new legislative framework for education, have impacted upon the Catholic community and its schools as they have developed in recent years. Consequently, there has been debate about the way in which Catholic schools should respond to the changes (Arthur, 1995; Grace, 1995, pp. 159-178; Hyper, 1996).

The limitations in the scope of my research do not allow an exhaustive examination of all aspects of the development of Catholic education in England. Some selection is essential in order to establish the parameters of the investigation. Individual Catholic schools exist as religious and educational organisations, but also as part of a world wide religious movement claiming a universality of purpose. It can be argued that religious groups are fundamentally cultural organisations in as much as they are concerned primarily with the propagation and promulgation of particular values relating to an understanding of the nature and purpose of humanity; and their purpose is achieved, at least in part, in the process of personal interaction of their adherents (Thompson, 1973). Consequently, the

social or community dimension of religious activity can be regarded as an essential element (Smart, 1968) and, therefore, crucial to my investigation.

Educational priorities, both for and in schools, rest on a complex set of moral and social preferences and beliefs about what is good for individuals and society as a whole. However, to speak of society as a homogeneous entity implies a degree of agreement between the increasing numbers of disparate social, political, racial and religious groups in Britain today that is not obviously apparent (Finch & Scrimshaw, 1980; Oustan & Maughan, 1985). Traditionally, in England, schools have been regarded as communities with the headteacher having the role of developing, leading and maintaining it (Coulson, 1980; Southworth, 1988). As Williams (1983) describes, 'community', is a complex concept but it is apparent that membership of a discernible group is what gives individuals a prime source of individual identity and worth. Religious faith can be one of the main and more potent elements in the formation of a community, and its shared experience a source of strength and solidarity (Halstead, 1995). If the traditional view of English schools is to prevail, it follows that for them to be effective as a communities some degree of congruence is required between the preferences, beliefs and attitudes of all those involved in the enterprise (Hoyle, 1988). At the extreme it can be argued, for example, Christian education is impossible in a totally secular setting since it can only make sense in the context of a faith community (Smith, 1969; White 1982).

A concern with the explanations of meaningful social action found in states, groups or organisations leads to attempts to uncover the main determinants of action and, therefore, the mechanisms which facilitate social cohesion within them. In the context of this investigation into the workings of two particular Catholic schools I am concerned, therefore, with their effectiveness both as teaching and learning organisations and also as Christian communities involved in Catholic socialisation. Reynolds (1992b) notes that for

an "organisation to evoke the commitment of pupils, the research tells us the effective school has ... cohesion, consistency and constancy, which in the end will generate control" (p. 18). In the light of his general comments and the specific factors concerning Catholic schools that I have outlined above, the following areas would seem to be fundamental to any investigation that seeks to understand the functioning and effectiveness of schools in a Catholic context:

- *the nature of the school community and of the communities that they serve*
- *the nature of Catholic culture and its interaction with the culture of the schools*
- *the nature and forms of social control that are exercised within the schools*

The three concepts, community, culture and social cohesion, will form the parameters for the case studies and serve to illustrate my understanding of the values, attitudes and practices of the two schools as they relate to their academic effectiveness.

This chapter is written in three sections. The first focuses on the historical context within which the Catholic community and culture have developed in England; the second outlines the underlying principles of Catholic schools as described in official documents of the Catholic Church written in the last forty years. The third section is more speculative. Using insights from psychology, philosophy and sociology, it concentrates on the possible beneficial effects Catholic culture may bring towards creating the conditions for the academic effectiveness of its schools. In particular, consideration is given to the potential for developing appropriately supportive conditions for social harmony and control within the schools which the effective schools research suggests are necessary for sustained high levels of academic achievement. In illuminating the claim by the Catholic Church of a distinctive nature and purpose for its schools, it will be argued that Catholic schools serve a specific community having a history and religious culture which encourages and supports

the creation of the necessary conditions for them to provide a particularly effective academic education.

Understanding Catholic Schools in England

An evaluation of the effectiveness of a school should take into account its cultural background. This is particularly relevant in England where schools are traditionally regarded as communities with particular purposes, values and philosophies and whose leaders are expected to determine and establish an appropriate ethos that will enable the realisation of their fundamental aims. Shipman (1968) argues that the content of education covers all aspects of culture, by which he means the accumulated knowledge, attitudes and mores of a particular society. He also notes that while "a school is organised to transmit moral values ... some schools seem to have few problems, while others, drawing pupils from a similar background, have many" (pp. 152 & 154).

To some extent today, the differences noted by Shipman may be exacerbated by the increasing cultural pluralism and divisions in English society. As schools inevitably do more than just teach facts, there may be areas of potential or real conflict between the values individual schools seek to transmit through their overt and 'hidden' curriculum and those of the dominant culture in society, and even with some families whose pupils they teach. For example, there will be tensions between the values of an increasingly secular society and those of schools based on religious principles. Cardinal Basil Hume put the case most strongly when he argued at the Catholic Education Service National Conference in Birmingham that, in current English society:

"Disputes over the purpose of education reflect a much deeper conflict in our society over what it is to be human. We are in fact in a battleground of competing ideologies, fighting for the minds and imaginations of the young, offering rival views of human fulfilment and happiness" (Hume, 1995, p. 3).

School organisation may be a major factor in pupil achievement, as recent effective schools literature suggests, but it cannot be divorced from the cultural background of the community and, more specifically, of its pupils. Francis (1980) argues that secondary school processes are not static, but are, in part, formed by the pupils engaged in them. If it is the case that schools have any formative influence, those pupils are likely to bring with them attitudes and values from their primary schools. He further suggests that the pupils' behaviour must be related to pupil motivation and intentions arising out of their personal histories. Consequently, research focused on the effectiveness of schools should clarify what would count as a supporting environment for the particular pupils that it serves (Francis, 1980) and argue through the values, beliefs, significance and history of the schools that pupils attend (Burgess, 1980). Hargreaves (1982) gives support to those views when he argues:

"... each man can make sense of himself only in relation to his family, his kin and their forebears and the social and cultural worlds in which they lived, and in relation to other people with different family histories and cultures" (p. 13).

The Catholic Community and Culture in England - Historical Context

The development of what we would recognise as the Catholic school system today can be traced back to the restoration of the Catholic hierarchy in England in 1850. The Catholic community in England goes back much further. Despite the Reformation, a significant remnant of the old English Catholic gentry and commoners continued to live and work and practise their faith, so that it is possible to trace their continuous history as a community up to modern times. That community was utterly transformed when the religious hierarchy, with its authority based in Rome, was restored in 1850. The form of Catholicism begun in England at that time survived largely unaltered into the 1950s and with it the pattern of educational provision (Archer, 1982; Bossy, 1975; Norman, 1986). The term *hierarchy* is used here in the technical ecclesiastical sense and refers to the distribution of ordained orders and ministries within the Catholic Church, namely deacon,

priest and bishop. It is often used generically, though inaccurately, of the Pope and bishops.

Eighteenth and Nineteenth Century Background

During the half-century between 1778 and 1829, the structure of anti-Catholic legislation that had developed since the Reformation was dismantled. By 1820, the social leadership of the old remaining Catholic aristocracy had ceased to be of real significance in the composition and activity of the Catholic community at large which was beginning to be concentrated in the emerging industrial cities, swollen by Irish Catholic immigrants from the 1790s onwards and the gradual population drift from the countryside. It has been estimated that in 1770 there were about eighty thousand Catholics in England and Wales. By 1850, that figure was nearer seven hundred and fifty thousand, approximately a tenfold increase. About a quarter of those were living in the northern cities of Preston, Wigan, Liverpool and Manchester (Bossy, 1975).

The huge influx of Catholics into the cities hastened the development of Catholic schools which, by 1847, had come under the control of the bishops rather than local, individual congregations. Following the restoration of the hierarchy by Pope Pius IX in September 1850, it was agreed that the establishment of schools should be the preferred priority of all congregations (Province of Westminster, 1852).

The Forster Education Act of 1870 set up the 'dual system' of educational provision which ensured the introduction of Board Schools to fill the gaps left by the voluntary bodies (Barnard, 1961). The bishops were in total agreement that Catholic schools should be retained and, if possible, expanded to meet the needs of Catholic parents despite the fact that board schools were "better equipped, larger and more efficient" (Barnard, 1961, p. 168). Their desire to compete was centred on the issue of how best to control the style

and content of religious instruction. From the Catholic point of view, it was argued that the Board Schools "banished God ... (and) it was necessary that the peoples' pastors should be able to set up schools to compete with the education that was being given by the world ..." (Archer, 1982, p. 257). For the vast majority of Catholics at this time, the local parish, with its church or chapel and schools, provided stability, a sense of belonging, of pride and self assertion and a strong base which gave solidarity with the wider Catholic body. The school was the place where people learned their Catholicism and, together with the church, provided the community with its essential focal point (Archer, 1982).

In 1869, Education Councils were set up in each diocese to further the building of schools. When the Forster Act was passed there were three hundred and fifty Catholic elementary schools. By 1880 there were over seven hundred and fifty, established mainly through the Education Councils and provided through the financial support of a predominantly poor working class community (Cruickshank, 1963). The success of the Catholic community in raising money to build schools was rewarded by their educational achievements. Despite the scarcity of equipment and the lower salaries paid to the teachers (Barnard, 1961), Catholic pupils obtained better academic results than those from Board schools during this period (Adams, 1882; Finan, 1975; McClelland, 1983). While the reasons for their relative success is not certain, it is possible that it may have been, in part, because of the sense of involvement such money-raising efforts generated and a realisation that one key to social advancement lay in education.

Twentieth Century Developments

The numbers of Catholics continued to increase during this period, while at the same time the Protestant churches were in numerical decline. In 1912 there was a Catholic population of 1.7 million; by 1962 it was 5.6 million, though the rise can partly be explained by new statistical techniques (Norman, 1986). Following the pattern of the

previous century, the Church was strongest in Durham, the North Riding of Yorkshire, Cumberland, Northumberland, Lancashire, Cheshire, Warwickshire and London. Only in Lancashire and Durham were there large rural populations, the rest were mainly urban, working class and still relatively poor.

The national leaders of English Catholics during the first part of this century came from lower-middle class families. They remained primarily inward looking and it was not until the succession of John Heenan as Archbishop of Westminster in 1963, just after the Second Vatican Council began, that there were any ecumenical encounters with other churches. Though still largely urban and almost wholly working class, Catholics began to move into the suburbs towards the end of the first half of the century and in the period between the wars started to infiltrate the middle classes. Catholic grammar schools played a significant part in enabling this development, often deliberately setting out to create a Catholic middle class (Morris, 1968; Martin, 1990). However, the typical unit was still the small urban parish, with church and elementary schools, the multiplication of institutions more or less keeping up with the rise in population.

The exclusivity of Catholic self identification also fostered social separation. Up until the 1940s, Catholics constituted a distinct sub-culture of the working class community. While many of the characteristics of a sub-culture remained, the social separation began to disintegrate in the post-war years (Hornsby-Smith, 1972; Archer, 1982; Norman, 1986), though some identifying class elements may have remained. For example, Brown (1965) reports a less close relationship between Roman Catholic parents and their children than with other identifiable groups, which, he suggests, may result from their comparatively harsher child-rearing methods which have been reported in several studies (Brown, 1965, pp. 175-178).

The extension of secondary education following the 1944 Education Act encouraged the breakdown of insularity as Catholic secondary schools drew their pupils from several parishes, often many miles apart. On the other hand, the priority given to a distinctive Catholic education, provided in its own schools, helped the Catholic community to preserve a sense of its own teachings and a feeling of membership of a wider religious society. Together, they form a prime source of self identity and solidarity. The following description, taken from the Central Advisory Council for Education report, Half Our Future (Newsom Report, 1964), is an accurate picture of a Catholic working class community in the late 1950s and early 1960s:

The School Population - Lancashire (2)

"The girls are all drawn from the immediate neighbourhood within an area of a half square mile, all of the same racial and religious stock, Irish and Catholic, and almost all are the children of unskilled labourers who are in full employment. The community is very stable despite slum clearance and most of the children are descended from former pupils."

(Newsom Report, p. 19)

Family Life and General Social Behaviour - Lancashire (2)

"The (Roman Catholic) parish clergy hold a unique position in dockside parishes, however relaxed some parishioners may be in religious observance. The parents are amenable to quite slight pressure from the school, perhaps because the school has been under the Sisters for nearly a century, though the general moral standpoint that we all share has a good deal to do with it. People are decent and good-living; there are strikingly few broken homes and illegitimate children. Families are still fairly large, and there is a great family sense so that, even when mothers are out at work, there is always some relative, usually the grandmother to turn to ... Although there is a great deal of talk of "murdering" and "battering", I have only come across two cases in six years of girls severely beaten by father or mother. The parents are foolishly generous and quite inconsistent in their treatment of the children who are adept at evading consequences. The bad language shrieked from the top balcony of the tenements sounds appalling but appears to be a rather a maternal safety valve than a heart-felt threat. Indeed, the children are very much loved and secure in their family affection. Every new baby is welcomed to an extra-ordinary extent. The girls are very kind to little ones and to the old. I have never come across an instance of rudeness or unwillingness to

oblige an old person, though this may be due to caution, since grandparents are still powerful. They are rude to neighbours, carrying on family quarrels with gusto, and fights are common. I have much work in keeping fights out of school, and it is horrifying how even "good" girls all flock to watch a fight anywhere. The girls will fight as fiercely as the boys if they get the chance. Most girls stay up very late but few stay out. Those who do, stay on the tenement landings in the semi-darkness with the boys. Their main amusements are gambling, singing or cat-calling, horse-play and some sex-play. Sexual laxity is rare in this district under school leaving age. I have had no schoolgirl mothers and only three girls who have tried their hand at soliciting or got into the company of a prostitute by choice. Girls marry very young, so, whilst doing all we can to deter them from marriage before 18, we do our best in the Fourth Year to give them some training for their career as wife and mother."

(Newsom Report, p. 20-21)

It could be argued that the description above conforms to the concept of community developed in the USA by MacIver (1937). He argues that the basic criterion of community is that all of one's social relationships may be found within its physical confines. Catholic communities in the 1990s, generally, are unlikely to conform physically to the model characterised in the Newsom Report as such working class communities began to break up and become more dispersed both physically and socially (Archer, 1982). However, in the sense that Catholic communities still comprise people with common interests and activities, they are an identifiable grouping in society, though physical proximity and common social standing will not necessarily be distinguishing features (Webber et al, 1964, pp. 108-111).

In the 1960s, following the Second Vatican Council, the breakdown of the insularity of the Catholic Church in England began to gather pace. Against the background of more openness towards the world advocated by the Council, the growth of the Catholic middle class in England and the emergence of more pluralistic, secular and multi-cultural society, the traditional role of Catholic schools came into question. The breakdown in the consensus view was exacerbated by problems created by a falling birth-rate and the general decline of organised religion leading to a great deal of debate and division as to the

nature and purpose of Catholic schools (Jebb, 1968; Tucker, 1968; Glass, 1971; Cunningham, 1971; Spencer, 1967, 1971; Hornsby-Smith, 1972; Archer, 1982; Francis, 1986; Green, 1990; McClelland, 1992; Barnes, 1993; Arthur, 1990, 1991, 1993, 1994, 1995).

Despite the concerns of many commentators, the predominant view since the Second Vatican Council, that the primary purpose of Catholic schools is to serve the needs of the Catholic population, has been upheld in official Church documents and in the public pronouncements of the bishops (Signposts & Homecomings, 1981; Catholic Commission for Racial Justice, 1982; Bishops Conference, 1989; 1991). However, there is a view, also based on the pronouncements of the Council, that Catholic schools may take on a more missionary role in society, particularly in circumstances where there are significant ethnic minorities or where Catholic schools are located in areas having small Catholic populations (Baum, 1982, 1988; Principals of Catholic Sixth Form Colleges, 1994; Bishops Conference, 1994).

In some individual cases, regardless of the immediate social circumstances where the school is located, there has been pressure to develop a role for Catholic schools as a benefit to the community as a whole rather than for the faith community of baptised Catholics (Hyper, 1996; Murray, 1996). This has led some to make a distinction between 'Catholic schools' and 'schools for Catholics' (Drake, 1995).

A more useful analysis, perhaps, is found in the three types of school suggested by Arthur (1995). He delineates three models of Catholic education: 'dualistic', 'pluralistic' and 'holistic'. Schools adopting a dualistic approach seek to serve a Catholic faith community but separate their religious and educational functions, regarding them as two distinct and unconnected activities. They teach the secular curriculum and see their Catholicity as an

addition, a bolted-on religious ethos. Some promoters of the pluralistic model assume that single faith schools are inappropriate for youngsters living in a pluralistic society. Others, that it is simply no longer possible. Consequently, for both groups, Catholic faith and practices are presented as one of a number of possible alternative 'life-stances' which pupils are encouraged to explore and, possibly, accept. Such a school would seek to attract pupils of a variety of faiths and possibly those who had no religious affiliation. The holistic model is that of the confessional school which seeks a synthesis of faith and culture and looks to build a faith community together with the home and parish to transmit a specific Catholic vision of life (Arthur, 1995, pp. 227-233). This is the traditional, and still the usual, model of Catholic schools in England and Wales. These divergent approaches, though possibly rooted in some commonly held principles, will be discussed more fully in the context of the case studies in chapter 7.

Features of the Catholic Community and Their Culture

The term culture, used in a sociological or anthropological sense, refers to the shared customs and understandings of a community that are acquired and developed only through a tradition of at least several generations of common everyday experiences. These will be both within the families and the institutions that form the focus of their lives. From the sociological point of view, everything acquired by human beings that is not inherited can be regarded as culture (Worsley, 1972). It is also used to describe a way of life of a specific group of people, the essential element of which is a specific value system (Amalorpavadass, 1990).

Sociologists now accept "it is more meaningful to refer to the sub-cultures of recognisable groups in society rather than to assume the existence of a single pervasive culture" (Hornsby-Smith, 1972, p. 299). The distinct Catholic sub-culture he identified still exists in England having its own religious, social and moral norms of behaviour, values and belief

systems, though levels of adherence and commitment to them may, of course, vary. Examples of religious behaviour would include attendance at Mass on Sundays and other religious festivals. Social and moral norms would include an expectation of sexual continence and life-long marriage. Distinctive mainstream Catholic values would cover such matters as respect for all human life and the rejection of abortion and euthanasia which reflect the Church's stance of moral absolutism and rejection of relativism (Veritatis Splendor, 1993). From that it derives its concepts of right and wrong and of sin. The community will hold particular religious beliefs, like, for example, those relating to the existence and nature of God, the Trinity, Christ's redemptive death and resurrection, and the nature of the Mass and other sacraments.

Catholic communities in England today have emerged into general society after a long period of persecution, repression and social segregation. While active institutionalised persecution has been removed, recent comment in the Catholic and secular press has highlighted evidence of a perception of continuing covert discrimination against Catholics and their values both in law and within government. Examples given include the unofficial bar on a Catholic being appointed ambassador to the Vatican and Baroness Warnock's veto on the appointment of Catholics to the committee studying embryology (Graffius, 1994a; 1994b). Other examples cited include attitudes of socialist oriented political parties and trade unions towards pro-life/anti abortion campaigners (MacDonald, 1994) and claims of anti-Catholic bias in the media (Grace, 1994; Graffius, 1994a; Lethbridge, 1994; Widdecombe, 1994). It has even been suggested that many Catholics in Britain are familiar with a religious prejudice that is akin to racism (Longley, 1995). Though such a view may be regarded as extreme, the argument persists that there are entrenched anti-Catholic sentiments in English society. These can, perhaps, be best captured in the comment of Christopher Lasch, the former non-Christian editor of *The New Oxford Review*, and recorded in his obituary. "It is politically incorrect to make jokes or cutting remarks about

anyone, except Catholics" (Rolheiser, 1994). However, despite any remaining discrimination, real or imaginary, Catholics are now well established, thriving and form a significant minority community in a pluralistic and multi-faith society.

Today, though Catholic communities have a predominantly working class background, they are essentially religious rather than social groupings. In the Conciliar documents of the Second Vatican Council (1963 - 65), the Catholic concept of community is rooted in the theological idea that its members are part of a mystical body (*Lumen Gentium*, 1964). The concept of membership, in the sense St. Paul uses, is more accurately understood as organs of a body; that is, as things essentially different from, but complementary to, one another, differing not only in structure but in function (St. Paul's first letter to the Corinthians, 12. 4-31). The religious concept of community, therefore, while encompassing accepted sociological definitions, is built around an understanding of a particular concept of family life in which the individuals are members "in the organic sense precisely because they are not members or units of a homogeneous class ... it is a unity of unlikes, almost incommensurables. The separate units are not interchangeable" (Lewis, 1977, p. 15).

Catholic culture can be identified in a set of distinct religious beliefs with their concomitant human values and behaviour of its adherents. For many Catholics their sense of identity as being part of a group, their cultural identity, will be based on those religiously based characteristics (Halstead, 1995). It will be evident, to some extent, even when the community is quite widely dispersed physically and socially, though there may be differing levels of commitment within it, and while there is greater debate among Catholics about religious and moral matters than in past decades. In other words, there is, what can be described as, a continuing sense of Catholic tribalism existing within the increasingly turbulent social climate that has developed in England during recent years.

Catholic values, attitudes and practices are rooted in a particular concept of God revealed in sacred scriptures and through the life and teachings of Jesus of Nazareth. Those teachings are articulated by the Church in a series of definitive documents such as Papal encyclicals, the conciliar and post conciliar declarations and decrees of the Second Vatican Council and catechisms. Of the recently published 'Catechism of the Catholic Church' (1992), Pope John-Paul II writes:

"This catechism is given to them (the Church's Pastors and Christian faithful) that it may be a sure and authentic reference for teaching Catholic doctrine ... (and) to every individual who asks us to give an account of the hope that is in us and who want to know what the Catholic Church believes" (Fidei Depositum, 1992, para 2).

Catholic Schools - Their Underlying Principles and Religious Culture

Just as different communities have their own culture, so do organisations. The purpose of the organisation plays an important role in determining its culture. For example, despite many similar physical characteristics, the culture of a prison differs markedly from that of a monastery housing an enclosed contemplative order of monks.

Organisational theorists point to a number of fundamentally different types of institutions having different forms of structure and methods of social control. It is argued that, the effectiveness of an institution will increase if there is congruence between the forms of worker involvement, the means used to ensure worker compliance and the reward systems that are provided (Etzioni, 1964). The impact of workers' personal culture on that of the institution is noted by Becker and Greer (1960) who make the point that workers' personal or *latent culture* need not necessarily be in sympathy with the *manifest culture* of the institution. If a particular latent culture is strong and widespread, organisational aims are less likely to be effectively realised. If the two are closely allied, effectiveness is enhanced.

These factors will be examined more fully in the third section of this chapter and form one of the focal points of the case studies in chapter 7.

Some theorists argue that, although schools do not conform to pure organisational models, they resemble them sufficiently to enable some understanding of the decision making processes affecting their day-to-day running (Handy, 1976; Handy & Aitken, 1986). Others argue that, at best, such models oversimplify the reality of school life, and at worst offer little insight into the way they function as organisation. They prefer an approach centred more on the individuals involved in the organisation and their personal interactions (e.g. Smart, 1969; Greenfield, 1975; Ball, 1987; Greenfield & Ribbins, 1993). The implications of their view can be summarised as follows:

"In describing human activity we only describe fully and correctly if we include in the description the meaning the activity has for the person or persons participating ... This description must include reference to the intentions and beliefs, etc., of those who engage in them"

(Smart, 1969, in Macey, 1969, pp. 65-66).

Education as a Religious Activity

Smart's approach is appropriate for organisations such as schools, where the nature of the activities undertaken tend to militate against very tightly controlled structures (Weick, 1976; Bell, 1980; Corwin, 1981). It is particularly useful in understanding the Catholic school culture given the claim that the Church's involvement in education is a religious activity (Cahill, 1994) and that the distinctiveness of Catholic education derives from the specific characteristics of Catholicism (Groome, 1996). The Declaration on Christian Education (1965) describes the involvement the Catholic Church in education as follows:

"For her part Holy Mother Church, in order to fulfil the mandate she received from her divine founder to announce the mystery of salvation to all men and to renew all things in Christ, is under an obligation to promote the welfare of the whole life of man, including his life in this world insofar as it is related to his

heavenly vocation; she has therefore a part to play in the development and extension of education" (Gravissimum Educationis, 1965, Preface).

While secular needs are clearly recognised, the principle aims of Catholic education are couched in essentially religious terms.

"Christ did not bequeath to the Church a mission in the political, economic or social order: the purpose he assigned to it was a religious one" (Gaudium et Spes, 1965, para. 42).

"That as a baptised person is gradually introduced into a knowledge of the mystery of salvation, he may daily grow more conscious of the gift of faith which he has received; that he may learn to adore God the Father in spirit and in truth especially through liturgical worship; that he may be trained to conduct his personal life in righteousness and in the sanctity of truth, according to his new standard of manhood, i.e. the new creation given through baptism" (Gravissimum Educationis, 1965, para 2).

For Catholics, the revealed teaching of God through scripture speaks of the purpose of existence in terms of the development of the person to the fullest extent of human nature. It speaks of life with God on earth and in eternity. The scriptures describe the human race (created by God the Father, redeemed by his Son and sharing in the life of God through his Spirit); what they are to become ("be perfect as your Father in heaven is perfect", Matt. 5. 48); and the means by which they are to achieve it ("love God and your neighbour as yourself", Lk. 10. 27).

The Catholic understanding of the human potential for perfection requires some explanation in respect of the purpose of education as it is understood by the Church. The word 'perfect' in Matthew's Gospel (Matt. 5. 48), *telios* in Greek, imposes upon Christians the obligation of going beyond a traditional, Pharisaic-like interpretation of the commandments. Something more than adherence to laws seems to be implied; it is a moral completeness derived from a personal and experiential knowledge of God (McKenzie,

1965). Consistent with this view of God, the nature and purpose of human existence and a belief in an after-life, the Church argues:

"... true education is directed towards the formation of the human person in view of his final end and the good of society to which he belongs, and in the duties which, as an adult, he will have to share"

(Gravissimum Educationis, 1965, para. 1).

For the Catholic Church, 'formation', the idea of full human development in the light of God's intended purpose, includes religious education. As such, it has been recognised as a basic human right in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (United Nations, 1948, Article 18) and in the subsequent Declaration of the Rights of the Child (United Nations, 1959, Principle 2). Such rights are central to the theology of the Second Vatican Council and affirmed in the Declaration on Religious Freedom which claims:

"Every family, in that it is a society with its own basic rights, has the right freely to organise its own religious life in the home under the control of the parents. These have the right to decide in accordance with their own religious beliefs the form of religious upbringing which is to be given to their children. The civil authority must therefore recognise the right of parents to choose with genuine freedom schools or other means of education ..."

(Dignitatis Humanae, 1965, para 5).

The Church further argues that the task of imparting education belongs primarily to the family (Gravissimum Educationis, 1965, para. 3) and, consequently, there must be no state monopoly of schools since such a situation would be prejudicial to the natural human rights recognised by the United Nations declarations (Gravissimum Educationis, 1965, para. 6).

Catholic School Culture

The conciliar and post conciliar documents of the Second Vatican Council provide the framework within which the Catholic Church currently sees its world-wide educative role.

The Council's Declaration on Christian Education, (*Gravissimum Educationis*, 1965) moves away from the more isolationist position adopted by the Church in the first part of the century which saw Catholic schools acting as a bulwark against the subversive nature of society (*Divini Illius Magistri*, 1929). The change in emphasis makes it clear that Christian education has a role within the secular world and is, in a sense and in part, for the world's benefit (*Gaudium et Spes*, 1965, preface).

Moreover, the dual role of supporting Catholic parents in transmitting Catholic culture and working for the common good of a secular society creates tensions between secular and religious values. These are evident, for example, in the guidelines for governors of Catholic schools in the Archdiocese of Cardiff and Diocese of Minevia, published after the 1980 Education Act, Bishop Mullins says:

"In our own time, there is much in the law and in the behaviour of people which is quite contrary to the teaching of the Gospel. Our Catholic communities must quite deliberately reject much of what is described as progressive in our society. The school is an important part of the whole provision of the Church for building up the homes and parishes that look to Christ for guidance in living their lives"
(Mullins, 1981, p. 6).

However, in upholding the Catholic schools' role as a conserving force in society, Bishop Mullins makes clear his belief that the Church is not simply rejecting and condemning what it observes, but offering it to the community as a whole through evangelisation. In an address to the Catholic Teachers' Federation, he justifies the value of Catholic schools on the basis that they ensure that religious activities are seen to be part of normal everyday life. He argues:

"... the whole atmosphere and ethos of our world sees religion as an acceptable, even laudable thing, but on the strict understanding that it is the hobby of individuals or groups but without practical effects on the ordering of our society ... the only public act of religion is Sunday Mass ... the Catholic school should

ensure that its very nature is proclaimed like a beacon to the world at large so that the very act of attendance can be seen as a significant religious activity"
(Mullins, 1985).

In providing a religious alternative to secular education, it is clear that, to be effective, Catholic schools need, almost by definition, to be different in character and style from the prevailing secular model. On the one hand, a Catholic school is a civic institution; its aim, methods and characteristics are the same as those of every other school. However, if it is primarily a Christian community, the educational goals should be rooted in Christ, his teachings as recorded in the Gospels and concerned with transmitting the essential doctrines, devotions and corporate religious vision of Catholicism (Haldane, 1996). Consequently, while it should conform to the generally accepted school programmes of the day, it is expected to implement them within an overall religious perspective of human life and purpose. This, the Church claims, affects the nature of the curriculum though not necessarily its content, the relationship between teacher and taught and the internal school processes (Baum, 1988, para. 67).

The Church's view of its educative role starts from two basic premises: that there is a God from whom all good originates, and that Jesus of Nazareth, Christ, is the Son of God through whom mankind is redeemed. In this context redemption implies a liberation from a state of bondage caused by sin to the freedom that is brought by God's forgiveness and the promise of eternal life with Him. While the process of redemption is central to Christian faith, it has not been explicitly defined (Fiorenza, 1990). However, it is a pivotal concept in the Church's understanding of the nature of God and Jesus and on which the Church builds its particular view of humanity and the purpose of human existence:

"When he [mankind] works not only does he transform matter and society, but he fulfils himself. He learns, he develops his faculties, and he emerges from and transcends himself. Rightly understood, this kind of growth is more precious than

any kind of wealth that can be amassed. It is what man is, rather than what he has, that counts. ... Technical progress may supply the material for human advance but it is powerless to actualise it. Here then is the norm for human activity - to harmonise with the authentic interests of the human race, in accordance with God's will and design, and to enable men as individuals and as members of society to pursue and fulfil their total vocation"

(Gaudium et Spes, 1965, para. 35).

In claiming its schools are based on a philosophy in which faith, culture and contemporary life are brought in harmony, the Church describes their fundamental and general purpose as being:

"a place of integral formation by means of a systematic and critical assimilation of culture...a privileged place in which, through a living encounter with a cultural inheritance, integral formation occurs"

(Garrone, 1977, para. 26).

Their special function is to develop a culture which:

"... enables young people ... to grow ... in that new life which has been given them in baptism ... (and) so orients the whole of human culture to the message of salvation that the knowledge which pupils acquire of the world, of life and of men is illuminated by faith"

(Gravissimum Educationis, 1965, para. 8).

It is expected that the school culture will be rooted in the person and teaching of Christ, since the Church claims:

"in Christ, the Perfect Man, all human values find their fulfilment and unity"

(Garrone 1977, para. 35).

"it is and has been, from her beginning, the belief of the Church that she has an obligation to provide an education for her children by which their whole lives may be inspired by the spirit of Christ"

(Gravissimum Educationis, 1965, para 3).

The task of providing such an education involves the school in developing appropriate forms of catechesis for pupils. By catechesis, the Church means a systematic transmission

of Christ's teaching and the doctrines of the Church with a view to initiating individuals into a full Christian life. It is built on a certain number of elements; (1) the initial proclamation of the Gospel to arouse faith (evangelisation); (2) examination of the reasons for belief (apologetics); (3) experience of Christian living, including celebration of the sacraments; (4) integration into the ecclesial community and (5) apostolic and missionary witness (Catechesi Tradendae, 1979, para. 18).

In practice, since for some pupils initial evangelisation may not have taken place, catechesis may involve not only nourishing and teaching the faith but also with arousing it. However, its specific aim is to develop an existing faith. To do so, the Church argues, it should:

- *be systematic and designed to reach a precise goal*
- *deal with essentials, not transform itself into theological research*
- *be sufficiently complete, that is, more than just bible study*
- *open to all the other factors of Christian life since it is intrinsically linked with the whole liturgical and sacramental activity*

(Catechesi Tradendae, 1979, para 21).

The Church suggests there are four identifiable groups of students at different stages of intellectual maturation whom it seeks to catechise in school. As they mature different methodological or pedagogical approaches will be appropriate. For example, when children first go to school it is likely that catechesis will be didactic in character and directed by teachers and other adults mainly towards giving witness in the faith.

Adolescents and those entering adulthood may require other approaches as they assume responsibility for their own lives. However, it is argued that the catechesis of infants, children, adolescents and young people should not be in watertight compartments and that there should be no break between them. It argues further that, whatever methods are chosen, the transmission of the content of catechesis should remain whole and intact since

there would be no catechesis if the contact with differing cultures caused what the Church regards as truth to alter in any fundamental way (Catechesi Tradendae, 1979, para. 53).

In the face of claims that such an approach is indoctrination, a sub-branch of teaching, and therefore not really an appropriate educative role for a school (Hirst, 1981; Leahy, 1990), the Catholic Church asserts that, pedagogy of faith is not a question of transmitting human knowledge even of the highest kind, but a question of communicating God's Revelation in its entirety. The special character of the Catholic school and the underlying basis for the reason why Catholic parents should prefer it, is precisely found in the quality of religious instruction integrated into the education of the pupils. While, it is expected that Catholic schools should respect freedom of conscience, the Church argues they have a grave duty to make all concerned understand that God's call to serve him is binding in conscience. Consequently, a pedagogical technique is of value in catechesis only to the extent that it serves the faith that is to be transmitted and learned (Catechesi Tradendae, 1979, paras. 58, 69). In addition to its understanding of the catechetical role of its schools, the Catholic Church also has a very clear view about purposes that it regards as inimical to education in general which are in contrast to the economic benefits currently dominating planning and thinking in many areas of the English educational system.

"Education is not given for the purpose of gaining power but as an aid towards a fuller understanding of, and communion with man, events and things. Knowledge is not to be considered as a means of material prosperity and success, but as a call to serve and to be responsible for others"

(Garrone, 1977, para. 56).

Expressing Catholic Values

Given the Catholic Church's view that education is a religious activity, the distinctive culture of its schools ought to have religious characteristics. These should be related not just to religious instruction but be instrumental in the integration of academic studies into

a unified whole illuminated by religious faith. Cardinal Hume argues that the Catholic school should have a single Christian vision, an integrated concept of what makes a fully authentic and mature human being. The educative process within it should not be confined simply to the curriculum, nor to the academic, technical, artistic and sporting achievements of the school. The school should be a place in which there is the intention not only of exploring the mystery which God is, but also of demonstrating the Gospel in action. If it is to achieve those aims, the school must be consistent throughout and in every aspect reflect the Christian faith which should be both its inspiration and its justification (Hume, 1988, pp. 103-117).

If Cardinal Hume's views are to be realised in practice, the role of teachers, both as individuals and as a community, is vital. They are the human agents charged with the development of the Church's understanding of fully mature human beings and the prime movers in demonstrating the Gospel in action to their pupils. Their witness and behaviour will help to create the ethos of the school. The Catholic Church expects they will express their own Christian faith, particularly through their participation in the liturgical and sacramental life of their schools so helping to make them:

"meeting places for those who wish to express Christian values", "committed to the task of forming men and women who will make the civilisation of love [the Christian ideal for society] a reality" (Pope Paul VI, 1974; 1976).

The Church's expectation is spelt out in the post-conciliar document, The Catholic School (Garonne, 1977), and incorporated, in practical terms, in statements to governors of Catholic schools concerning any staff appointments that they make (Konstant, 1990) and also in the contracts of employment they are expected to use (Catholic Education Service). Together, these documents give clear indications of the views of the Catholic authorities in England and Wales.

"By their witness and their behaviour teachers are of the first importance to impart a distinctive character to Catholic schools" (Garonne, 1977, para. 78)
"Catholic teachers who freely accept posts in schools, which have a distinctive character, are obliged to respect that character and give their active support to it under the direction of those responsible" (Garonne, 1977, para. 80).
" ... The teacher hereby agrees: to have regard to the Roman Catholic character of the School and not to do anything in any way detrimental or prejudicial to the interest of the same; ..."
(Catholic Education Service, Teacher Contract, Clause 4, iii, a)

Catholic School Culture - Implications for Academic Effectiveness

It has been argued that societies can only preserve their existence by transmitting their culture from one generation to another and that schools function as one of the formal means of socialisation. As such, they are prime agents of cultural transmission (Shipman, 1968; King, 1969).

The transmission of a specific culture may present difficulties for individual teachers. The work of the most brilliant can be nullified if the underlying values and attitudes of the institution in which they work are alien to their own. In a similar way, the effectiveness of any institution in achieving its purposes will depend very much on the extent to which its goals are accepted at a conscious or unconscious level by its members. The failure of a school may be as a result of professional incompetence, but without the commitment of its members to its purpose, both staff and pupils, it cannot conceivably be very effective (Hirst & Peters, pp. 106-107). Even assuming that the teachers have a common vision and purpose, the response of pupils to their efforts may be accepting, apathetic or, perhaps, antagonistic depending upon their own cultural values. It is argued that pupils often do not come to school predisposed to acquire knowledge and understanding but attend through compulsion. Taking that view, an essential part of the school's function is to control or convert the potentially hostile, and unless it can do so in sufficient numbers it will be difficult for it to be effective in its socialising role by transmitting agreed values and knowledge (Hirst & Peters, 1970, pp. 109).

Clearly some schools manage to do so more effectively than others. The next section of the chapter will speculate on the possible advantages enjoyed by Catholic schools that might aid the social control necessary for teaching and so enhance the potential such schools may have for academic effectiveness.

The Transmission of Values

Because of what he sees as a lack of a dominant ideology in modern society, King infers that the values, attitudes and accepted norms of behaviour in Catholic schools serving a Catholic community will be much more focused than they could be in a county school (King, 1969, p. 6). Others also argue it is difficult for teachers and schools to develop a specific sense of direction in a pluralistic society (Dancy, 1979). Consequently, some teachers argue that values are ultimately a matter of taste without objective foundation and conclude that they have no right to promote one set of values or one life-style in preference to another. However, despite such arguments, teachers are "in the grip of some educational theory whether they recognise it or not" (Moore, 1978) and "they do in fact and in practice promote a particular set of values - their own. They cannot help but do so" (Pring, 1978c).

It is argued that, to be effective socialising agents, schools must practice the values that they seek to promote (DES, 1980). On an individual level, such a view has been expressed variously that no-one can pass on values or beliefs they do not hold themselves (Lewis, 1946); that teachers must be models of the type of educated person they wish their pupils to become (White, 1982) and that without a sympathetic attitude to a specific set of values on the part of teachers, they are most unlikely to be successfully assimilated by their pupils (Smart, 1966). Catholic teachers who choose to teach in Catholic schools are more likely to meet those conditions because of their shared faith and the expectations the Church has of them. It is argued, they should not be content simply to present Christian values as a set

of abstract objectives, but use them as a direct means of promoting the attitudes which they want to encourage in the pupils (Garonne, 1977, para 32).

The more completely the Catholic teacher gives concrete witness to Christ, the more this ideal will be accepted as an appropriate model and imitated by children, the majority of whom are likely to come from homes where a similar ideal is accepted or at least understood and appreciated. If their teachers approach the ideal, a Catholic school will not be a place where pupils are simply given a choice of intellectual values, but where children see the precepts of Christian life displayed by their parents acted out in its normal daily routines. Pupils should learn, as a consequence, that they are called to be living witnesses to God's love in their actions, and also grasp the concept that no human act is morally indifferent whether it takes place in their school, their home or beyond (Baum, 1988).

Hargreaves (1982, pp. 71-73), argues that the ability to succeed at school is a matter of 'cultural capital', by which he means that the parents style of life, their attitudes, manner of speaking and thinking is consonant with the culture of the school and, therefore, there is a process of mutual reinforcement. If his view is correct, where Catholic schools serve a coherent and practising Catholic community having a clear and specific Catholic culture, the Catholic teachers working in them, who are likely to be steeped in that same culture, would seem to have an easier task in transmitting a set of values and attitudes than their colleagues in county schools where pupil backgrounds may be more culturally diverse (Marvell, 1974). Consequently, Catholic schools are more likely to be able to function effectively and their pupils to profit from their experiences while attending them.

Teacher Commitment

One source of teachers' commitment to their role is rooted in religious belief (Nias, 1981). Their effectiveness will be helped by having a positive self image, possibly anchored in,

and sustained by, in-school and extra-school reference groups (Nias, 1985). Such groups can include positively responding pupils or colleagues who provide justification and self-belief. However, the most sustaining source is more likely to be found in family background and upbringing, a religious institution or belief, political beliefs and educational theorists and writers (Nias, 1985). It is likely that Catholic teachers, who have deliberately chosen to work in Catholic schools, will have a strong religious commitment, with the church as a prominent reference group. If the school approximates to the concept of a 'religious community', the teachers' self image and level of commitment may be enhanced and a virtuous circle established.

The Catholic teacher's role in generating a community climate permeated by the idea of Christian love (Baum, 1988, para. 1) should be based on the concept of charity, for which the Greek word is '*agape*'. St. Paul spells out the implications for Christians in his first letter to the Corinthians. He describes such love or charity as:

"... patient and kind; not jealous or boastful; not arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at wrong, but rejoices in the right. It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. It never ends ..." (St. Paul, 1. Cor. 13, 4-8).

Lewis (1981) describes human charity (*agape*) as resembling divine gift-love which is wholly disinterested and desires what is simply best for the beloved. When practised, it enables love to be given to those who are not naturally loveable, for example enemies, those who have done us criminal harm, the sulky individual and the sneering. He suggests that devoted mothers, a beneficent ruler or teachers can be exemplars of the human version of divine gift-love (Lewis, 1981, pp. 117-118).

The implications for teachers in Catholic schools is clear. They are expected to give the same affection, respect, and service to their pupils and show the gratitude, gentleness,

goodness and helpfulness that is a mark of the Christian concept of family love (Baum, 1988, para. 87). They should, therefore, have a view of their obligations when 'in loco parentis' which is beyond that expected by educational law or by the normal definitions of the level of commitment expected of the caring professions (Glass, 1971; O'Hear, 1990). If Catholic teachers acknowledge, accept and respond appropriately to the specific religious character of, what the Church regards as, a God given vocation (Baum, 1982, Chp. 1), their commitment is likely to be greater than others less ideologically driven, or those with a different conception of the nature and value of humanity. For example, a view of pupils as individual children of a loving and caring God sharing in His divine nature demands a different response from teachers than that generated by a view which sees them as units of production for the benefit of the state.

Eraut (1981) distinguishes between the moral, legal or contractual and professional accountability of teachers. He argues that, apart from the obligation to obey the law of the land, a teacher is only legally accountable to the headteacher and through them the employer. There is no contractual relationship with pupils and parents, though a moral one does exist. The traditional social cohesion of Catholic communities and the close partnership existing between home, parishes and schools (Egan, 1985), together with the general acceptance of the basic purpose of Catholic schools, may create a subtlety different form of moral obligation than that for teachers in county schools. It increases the demands made upon them and, consequently, may result in a greater level of commitment, especially if teachers see the demands as part of their own religious vocation. Compared to teachers in the county sector, "their counterparts in a Catholic school must carry out the same functions with the additional responsibilities for the care and nurture of the faith of children ... are subject to greater pressures and these cannot be brushed aside as non-existent" (Roehampton Papers No. 5, 1986). One example is the religious task that they

accept when teachers take on the responsibilities of preparing pupils to receive the sacraments (Schools Council Working Paper, 44, 1972).

Religious Culture - Some Possible Beneficial Effects

The Catholic Church asserts:

"Man is by nature and vocation a religious being. Coming from God, going toward God, man lives a fully human life only if he freely lives by his bond with God"
(Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1994, para. 44).

Some educational philosophers lend support to the claim that religion is integral to human existence, and suggest that its study, though not necessarily of any particular religion, should form an essential part of the school curriculum and of pupils' understanding (Phenix, 1964, 1966; Hirst, 1965; Hirst & Peters, 1970). However, there is a view from some proponents of religious education that objective study of religion, or the phenomenological approach which seeks to understanding through various degrees of experiential participation and involvement, is an inadequate response to human need (Melchert, 1995). It is argued that some form of committed involvement in religious activity is necessary for full human development. This argument is sometimes made both on philosophical (Lewis, 1955; Bent, 1978), and pedagogical grounds (Lewis, 1955; Goldman, 1965; Smart, 1968). These apparently conflicting views are symptoms of the inherent tensions arising from different conceptions of what it means to educate.

Education is both *educere* (to lead out) and also *educare* (to form). The first emphasises the freedom and autonomy of learners to determine their own values and beliefs, the second the idea of teachers moulding the personality of pupils to appreciate truth, goodness and the relative value of different world views (Roebben, 1995). The Catholic Church speaks of 'formation' that implies its belief in a particular given human nature towards which people are naturally orientated but have the free will to reject. From that view of education

comes a belief, therefore, that children should be guided or trained to understand and accept their nature and act in accordance with it.

Maslow's theory of human motivation lends psychological support to the view of the necessity of religious activity for human fulfilment. He suggests a hierarchy of human needs which it is necessary to meet if individuals are to realise their full potential, or in his terms, become 'self-actualised' people. He associates such a state with the capacity for truly disinterested love of others and an appreciation of transcendent reality (Maslow, 1964; 1970). From the psychological point of view, religion can be regarded as one form of coping response to human experience. It represents a more or less deliberate adjustment of thought, emotion and action to daily life based on a systematic body of beliefs or dogma which can have beneficial material effects for those who believe (Thouless, 1967, pp. 433-441; Brown, 1973). Religious belief can reduce anxiety and provide a basis for a favourable self-concept (Argyle, 1964), both of which conditions are associated with high levels of pupil achievement in schools (Purkey, 1970; Staines, 1971; Murgatroy & Gray, 1982; Atherley, 1990). However, while religion can have such positive benefits this does not necessarily imply that it will do so for all individuals.

Brown (1973) argues that the weight of evidence suggests an individual's acceptance or rejection of religion may depend on personality characteristics or be related to growth and maturation. His own findings support a cognitive theory of religious behaviour and suggests that the strength of religious belief is associated with acceptance and membership of a Church which, in turn, supplies the essential social support that is required for its maintenance (Brown, 1962; 1973). Argyle suggests that where religious beliefs are adopted because they meet the individual's desire for cognitive clarity, such needs are most successfully met by a dogmatic set of beliefs. He points out that, of the recognised churches, the most dogmatic and rigid are held by Roman Catholics (Argyle, 1964). Based

on these findings, the religious orientation of Catholic schools, if achieved, provides a particularly supportive environment for its own faith community.

There is much evidence from history and current events to suggest that religion is, paradoxically, associated both with tolerance and intolerance towards contrary views and life-styles. However, those who are genuinely devout, regarding religion as a supreme value in its own right which transcend self-centred needs, show noticeably un-prejudiced behaviour (Argyle, 1958; Allport, 1966; Allen and Spilka, 1967). A positive and active religious life seems also to be associated with good personal adjustment, happiness and positive attitude to death among the aged (Moberg, 1965).

While there is no evidence to indicate that Catholics are more likely to be genuinely devout than any other religious group in society, there is some evidence from Ireland indicating higher levels of religious experience among Catholic children than their Protestant counterparts (Greer, 1982; Francis & Greer, 1993). Recent empirical research has also found that religiosity, indicated by frequency of church attendance and personal prayer, is a significant predictor of positive attitudes towards school in general, individual academic lessons and overall academic achievement (Francis, 1992; Flynn, 1993). Francis gives three possible explanations for the observed connection between religiosity and favourable attitudes to school. He suggests that the relationship can be conceptualised "as part of a wider positive view of the social dimensions of life supported by a religious temperament ... as part of a wider conformist life style ... or as part of the wider projection of individual differences in personality on to the social environment" (Francis, 1992).

On the other hand, a small comparative study of schools in Belgium found that, after adjusting for socio-economic status and gender composition of the schools, the religious context of Catholic schools does not seem to be much more effective in fostering pupils'

personal well-being than state schools (Brutsaert, 1995). Since he defined well-being in terms of adjustment to school life as reflected by the affective measures of self-esteem, a sense of mastery, stress, fear of failure, a sense of belonging in school and a commitment to school and studying, Brutsaert's findings are an interesting sidelight on Francis's more extensive studies.

Discipline and Control

It is well established that, while schools can affect individual attitudes, the home and the peer group within school also have a significant influence. Where the degree of congruence is high between the pupils and their teachers' religious beliefs, practices, moral behaviour and values, the impact on the teacher's ability to control groups of pupils and obtain favourable responses is likely to be beneficial (Werthman, 1963; Galloway, 1981; Steed, 1985; Caffyn, 1989). It may be that easy acquiescence to the authority of the teacher is more a matter of social acceptance than an understanding of school rules being based on underlying shared moral values (Cullingford, 1988). However, the cultural setting of Catholic schools seems to provide the potential for a particularly supportive environment in which the teacher can exercise the control that is essential to learning in schools. Factors which may assist them include the belief of the Catholic Church in ethical absolutism, the concepts of sin and divine authority, a disposition towards hierarchical structures and the shared values that are associated with a faith community.

The personal authority of Catholic teachers, in moral matters and questions of value, is supported by a Church claiming the existence of a discernible and objective moral code. Its claims a universal morality, intrinsic to humanity and derived from God, that is known, or capable of being known, by human reason based on Natural Law (Veritatis Splendor, 1993). The Catholic Church opposes the understanding of individual morality being derived from social conditioning and claims that some actions are wrong "by reason of

their object" (*Veritatis Splendour*, 1993, para. 84). It argues, further, that individuals have free will and "that no human actions can be without a motive [which] are often sinfully selfish, without regard for our true self or for the needs of others" (Fagan, 1978). It argues that actions directed knowingly against God's will, ascertained through an informed conscience, are sinful and in themselves cause a break in the relationship that exists between God and humanity. In psychological terms, an individual's sinning is a deliberate negation of a God-given nature and potential which fractures their inner peace and alienates them from other people and from the material world (*Gaudium et Spes*, 1965, para. 13).

The phenomenon of guilt and existence of conscience appear to be universal human characteristics. From the religious perspective, it is argued that conscience is a command or authority integral to human nature. It is in some way an internal obligation placed upon, or at least accepted by, the individual which dictates a sense of duty, an imposition of what one ought to do (*Gaudium et Spes*, 1965, para. 16). However, it can, and often is, overridden by other human drives. Within Catholic doctrine, individual actions and behaviour that lessens human potential and development are regarded as opposing God's purposes and are, therefore, sinful. Sin is a fundamental concept of Christian faith requiring acknowledgement, repentance and God's forgiveness. Consequently, teachers in the Catholic schools have, in addition to the physical, political and social sanctions available to all other teachers, the sanctions that a religious view of morality, guilt and conscience brings. Perhaps, more importantly, they have a religious basis to encourage the forgiveness and rehabilitation of wrong-doers, so keeping them within the community and at the same time reinforcing norms of behaviour. Therefore, it is likely that pupils in Catholic schools will be taught within an atmosphere asserting that there is wrong doing in relation to its human rules which are founded in the divine. Where that is the case, questions of discipline and possible exclusion from a religious school community are not

straightforward and can bring tensions for those charged with making such decisions (Grace, 1993, pp. 167-169). However, in the light of Christian doctrines, pupils should learn that transgressions of school norms, if acknowledged and repented, will not necessarily result in being ostracised. Such an approach to school discipline is likely to be supported by parents and pupils who subscribe to the same religious beliefs, thus giving a greater degree of control to teachers than might be the case in a more diffuse cultural setting. At the very least, if not actively supported, the stance and its supporting concepts are likely to be recognised and understood. The same is unlikely to be the case in schools serving much less homogeneous communities.

Hierarchical Authority

The Catholic Church, by its own definition, is a hierarchical institution, claiming a ministry instituted by Christ and handed down through the generations in an unbroken apostolic succession:

"... the bishops received the charge of the community, presiding in God's stead over the flock of which they are the shepherds in that they are the teachers of doctrine, ministers of sacred worship and holders of office in government"
(*Lumen Gentium*, 1964, para. 20).

As such, the bishops have authority to lead the faith community that is in their care. The initial concept of authority used within the early Christian community was distinctive in its insistence that it was not to be exercised like that of the "gentiles" but rather as "one who serves" (Lk. 22:24-27), and in imitation of Christ who washed the feet of his followers (Jn. 13: 1-17). Authority was understood, not simply in terms of a sociological necessity to retain identity, unity and resolve conflicts, but as a spiritual authority found in a variety of personal gifts and forms of service to others (1 Cor. 12: 4-31; Eph. 4. 11; Rom. 12: 6-8).

In his explanation of the development of the concept of authority within the Church, Sanks (1990) shows that in the period up to Constantine it exhibited a strong charismatic

character along with the emergence of the present day offices of deacon, priest and bishop. Bishops were chosen from those having the most spiritual gifts which, combined with their continuity with apostolic teaching, gave them increased personal authority. With the adoption of Christianity as the established state Church in Constantine's reign its spiritual authority embraced an additional secular role. The two became more entwined until the Gregorian reforms of the 11th century which, in attempting to free the Church from the domination of political rule, developed the juridical concept of authority and established canon law. During the middle ages the Church's assertion of its own authority and autonomy from secular powers paradoxically took on many of its trappings, becoming almost indistinguishable from a worldly kingdom. In response to the challenge of the reformation to the principle of ecclesiastical authority, the Catholic Church began to emphasise the concept of tradition, not as a body of knowledge, but more in the sense of a transmitting and interpreting of canonical scripture by the hierarchy. This view was most forcibly expressed in the definition of papal infallibility made in 1870 at the First Vatican Council. The Second Vatican Council, while confirming the earlier view of papal sovereignty and infallibility, re-emphasised the concept of service and ministry. Since the publication of the 'Dogmatic Constitution of the Church' (*Lumen Gentium*, 1964), a balance has been established between the authority of the pope and the council of other Church leaders, the authority of scripture and the Spirit working through the community. It has produced a blend of the authority of tradition and the magisterium, based on the principles of legitimate diversity, collegiality and subsidiarity through which the spiritual, charismatic and ministering elements have re-emerged to counterbalance the juridical emphasis of more recent centuries (*Gaudium et Spes*, 1965, para. 43; Sanks, 1990).

In respect of education, the Church argues that the various responsibilities, both in the overall planning of educational projects and also within institutions, should be based on the concept of subsidiarity (*Gravissimum Educationis*, 1965, para. 3, 6; Garrone, 1977,

para. 70). That concept, first expounded by Pope Pius XI (*Quadragesimo Anno*, 1931), argues that activities affecting the well-being of the individual should be undertaken at the lowest institutional level commensurate with the nature of the task and the ability to carry it out.

The relationship between Catholic schools and the Church as a whole is both theological and legalistic. The school is one of the pastoral mechanisms by which the Church proclaims the Gospel and is both a sign of the Church in society and also its instrument.

"The Catholic school fully enters into the salvific mission of the Church ... (which) ... involves a sincere adherence to the Magisterium of the Church, a presentation of Christ as the supreme model of the human person, and a special care for the quality of the religious education ..." (Baum, 1988, para. 38).

In modern Catholic usage, the term 'magisterium' has come to be associated almost exclusively with the teaching role and authority of the hierarchy. It is also used to refer, not to the teaching office as such, but the body of men who exercise this office, namely the Pope and bishops. However, with a revealed religion, such as Christianity, the ultimate authority is God the revealer. In the Catholic Church authoritative pastoral responsibility for transmitting the message to others has been passed from the apostles to the Popes and bishops (*Lumen Gentium*, 1964, para. 20; 22; 24) to whom the task of interpreting the word of God has been exclusively entrusted. "Their authority is exercised in the name of Jesus Christ" (*Dei Verbum*, 1965, para. 10). Each bishop has responsibility and authority regarding the teaching of Christian doctrine in his own diocese, which he exercises through his own teaching, whether orally or in pastoral letters, and by his promotion of sound teaching in his diocesan catechetical and educational institutions (Sullivan, 1990). To ensure this is the case, the recognition of the school as a Catholic school is always reserved to the competent ecclesiastical authority (Baum, 1988, para. 38), which in Britain is the Ordinary of the diocese, its bishop or archbishop. The norms of the Church

in this respect are to be found in Canons 800 - 803 of the Code of Canon Law. Should difficulties and conflicts arise about the authentic character of a Catholic school the Ordinary can and must intervene (Garrone, 1977, para. 73).

Of those who work in Catholic schools, the clergy, both regular and those in religious orders, are bound by Canon Law and their vow of obedience. Lay people are not in the same position. However, by the exercise of its authority through the foundation governors it appoints, the Church ensures that the education offered in its schools is distinctively Catholic. Operating within such a hierarchical and religious culture inevitably gives a greater potential for social control of pupils both by teachers and parents. As such, it helps create a climate of conformity in schools which is likely to assist academic achievement.

Practical Difficulties

The degree of religious understanding and adherence shown by parents will vary, as will their everyday involvement in parish life, particularly so if only one of them is a baptised Catholic. Catholic teachers will also, inevitably, have different levels of faith commitment. While such differences may not impinge upon their pedagogical competence, their ability to contribute towards developing and sustaining the Catholicity of the school may be affected. In addition, not all teachers in Catholic schools are themselves baptised Catholics (Catholic Education Service, 1992). This raises issues, both for them and for the schools, in terms of their effectiveness in carrying out the educative task as defined by Church documents.

The same will be true of the pupil population, as in recent years the numbers of non-Catholics in Catholic schools has risen when places became available because of the drop in the birth-rate (Catholic Education Service, 1992). Significant numbers of non-Catholic pupils may have an influence on the nature of the school and the effectiveness of the

education it provides (Francis, 1986b; Egan, 1986; Francis & Egan, 1990; Konstant, 1996).

Summary

While the Catholic Church and its schools may claim divine origins, both are also human institutions. As such, they are as susceptible to analysis as any other social organisation. This chapter has shown that there is a distinct Catholic community, or sub-culture, within English society, having its own history, beliefs, values, attitudes and practices that can legitimately claim to constitute a particular life-style. In meeting the educational, social and religious needs of its community, Catholic schools seem to accrue a number of advantages enabling them to be particularly effective. These potential benefits appear to include their religious nature, the support of an organised Church, the religiosity of the pupils and the coherence of the community that they serve. The community culture seems to provide effective forms of social control, a high degree of congruence between the values of the community and its schools, a traditional inter-dependence between parish, home and schools in community life and a strong sense of ownership and commitment towards its schools by the Catholic community that has its roots in the historical struggle to create and maintain them.

In the next chapter, two very different Catholic schools will be investigated. A case study approach will be used to describe how they use the potential benefits outlined above in their particular circumstances, and the possible effects that their different interpretation of the principles of Catholic education may have upon the academic success of their pupils.

CHAPTER 6

RESEARCHING THE ACADEMIC EFFECTIVENESS OF SCHOOLS

Introduction

This study originated as a quantitative investigation into the academic effectiveness of Catholic schools in England. The available literature, both here in England and the USA, is reviewed in chapter 3. It gives credence to the notion that Catholic schools are particularly effective in helping pupils achieve high levels of academic success, though no systematic investigation of the phenomenon has been made in this country. Consequently, there is very little direct empirical evidence to support or refute the accumulated signs concerning the effectiveness of Catholic schools in England in academic or social matters.

In my initial investigation I used a simplified form of multi-level modelling to assess school effectiveness. The approach compares actual levels of academic achievement in GCSE examinations in a sample of Catholic and non-Catholic schools with a model of what they ought to achieve taking into account differences in pupil populations. The process takes a black-box approach, attempting to answer a limited question, namely, are Catholic comprehensive schools more academically effective than their local authority maintained counterparts? The results, which are outlined in chapter 4, are unexpectedly ambivalent. One of the Catholic schools is the most academically effective in the sample. Its pupils, on average, achieve much higher GCSE scores than one would expect taking into account measures of their socio-economic status and intelligence. However, unexpectedly, the other Catholic school is the least effective.

Considering the findings in the light of existing evidence about Catholic schools' academic effectiveness, albeit fleeting and fragmentary, I have two choices. Either I leave the study

as it is, neither supporting nor refuting existing knowledge, or undertake some additional investigation to improve my understanding of why pupils of similar ability and background attending these two Catholic schools should have such different levels of academic achievement. I have chosen the latter. While the limited question originally posed is capable of a clear-cut answer, social research finds it more difficult to answer this broader question with the same degree of certainty. The choice of my research methodology, therefore, becomes that much more critical if any findings are to be valid (Wilson, 1979).

Partly because of the difficulties of establishing causality solely from a quantitative analysis of school outcomes, I have decided to undertake a qualitative case-study of the two schools combining data from fieldwork observation, interviews, school documentation and other archive material with a closer analysis of information arising from the original research project. In addition to my concern that a purely quantitative approach is unlikely to provide adequate insights, there are grounds for believing that possible reasons for the disparity in academic effectiveness may lie in the two schools' differing concepts of Catholic education and the mechanisms they used to implement their vision. Consequently, my overall approach follows a pattern frequently used by researchers today who blend quantitative and qualitative perspectives in one study (Miles & Huberman, 1988).

Research Methodology - Background

Despite the necessity for a case-study, the use of such an approach is not straight forward. There are a number of difficulties inherent in this form of methodology that have to be addressed. These include, among others, the idiographic/nomothetic dilemma; that is the degree to which descriptive accounts of a particular institution can be generalised outside the particular context. There are also issues concerning securing access to institutions and personnel and the inevitably fragmentary and selective nature of the evidence that is gathered, not to mention the interactive effects between the researcher and the subject

being studied. In this particular case there are additional problems. I had been the headteacher of one of the schools, frequently involved in a variety of ways in the other throughout that same period and, since 1992, involved in both schools in an advisory capacity. I will deal with the more general and typical problems first, before considering the peculiarities of my own status in relation to the two institutions and the methodological difficulties that it creates.

Until recent years, most researchers adopted a naturalistic approach when writing up their findings (Hammersley, 1983). However, over the past two decades in Britain, contemporary researchers in the social sciences have attempted to establish a different approach to the way in which such work is undertaken and reported. It has been increasingly recognised that the individual researcher does not behave as an objective automaton, but takes an active role in the process (Walford, 1991). This is particularly so in area of actual or possible education policy (Atkinson et al, 1988), which may be a factor arising from this research. Consequently, it is felt that an essential element in a qualitative study of this type is a reflexive account of the work by the researcher in which their actions are open to analysis in the same way as those of being studied (Hammersley, 1983). It contrasts most vividly with the attachment of earlier generations of researchers to a style of self-effacement leading almost to the point of invisibility (Troyna, 1994).

Research Validity and Reliability

External Validity

In all research the question of external validity is important; that is, to what extent can the findings be generalised? For those who regard fieldwork as idiographic and inescapably subjective to some degree, the root of the difficulty in generalising from the findings lies in the argument that researchers are more than just active elements in the process. They cannot be totally impartial and, consequently, bring personal bias into their research

(Gadamer, 1976; Hammersley, 1983; Walford, 1991). Further, it is argued that all research is, to a greater or lesser degree, ideologically driven, and some would argue that open partisanship in an attempt to change society is a legitimate sociological approach (Green, 1993; Troyna, 1995). Although the thrust of ideology may differ widely, from that of a political activist trying to bring about social change, to that of a hired researcher earning a living, there cannot be such a thing as pure, neutral or disinterested research (Shaw, 1979). To ignore the stance of the researcher is to ignore the essentially interactive nature of social studies and detract from the readers' understanding and appreciation of what is written (Hammersley, 1983; Walford, 1987). Underlying such views is the concept that research is a social activity and, consequently, any findings and observations arising from it can only be understood within the context of the values, attitudes and beliefs of all the participants, including the researcher.

While it may be true that every study must be constrained by both the limitations and the values, or stance, of the researcher, it is possible to use techniques, such as feed back to respondents and triangulation of sources, that can test the reported findings and the analysis of events that proceeds them (Lacey, 1979; Woods, 1986). To clarify research findings and counter claims of inevitable bias, semi-autobiographical, or reflexive, accounts of the work, are often included so that readers "will be better able to assess the validity, reliability and generalizability of that particular research ..." (Walford, 1991, p. 5). Recent and typical examples of this genre can be seen in accounts given by Hobbs (1988), Fountain (1993), Green (1993) and Roseneil (1993). However, Walford also states, "these accounts do not pretend to present *the* (his emphasis) truth about the research or even about the research methods ... but they do give a further perspective on the way in which research is conducted" (Walford, 1991, p. 5). The extent to which the additional perspective is helpful is open to argument and the difficulties of assessing the researchers' influence can be illustrated by the following statement:

"... the person of the ethnographer [is] the most important research instrument within ethnography. Yet, while crucial, it is not the easiest thing to study. As Pollard notes, 'I find it hard to comment in detail on how the type of person I am affected the research, although I am sure it did, indeed it was my deliberate intention to use my 'self' as a tool in the research process'. However, we are now beginning to get more research biographies to assist us in that task and we know that there are certain, almost logical, personal requirements to things like the presentation of self in gaining access to an institution, or in the handling of interviews. To these I add the mental states and psychological frameworks within which analysing and writing-up, in particular, are done, and the whole, I hope, helps to build up a picture of the ethnographer's personal kit"

(Woods, 1986, preface, ix).

The adoption of a reflexive style is used to help protect the research findings from being dismissed as irredeemably subjective, trivial or idiosyncratic. However, it is important for the reader to guard against assessing the validity of what is written on the basis of the status or (assumed) integrity of the writer. The reader can be misled into weighing the value of what has been written, not by applying criteria of, say, historical or philosophical scholarship, but by making a judgement of the writer based on the reflexive description of their work. To avoid encouraging this form of thinking, which Lewis labelled 'Bulverism' (Lewis, 1941), my account includes an explanation of my personal background which will illuminate the subsequent account of both my own actions as headteacher in one of the schools and my involvement in the other. However, in this chapter I will concentrate mainly on exploring the benefits and pitfalls of my chosen investigative techniques and strategies.

In doing so, I adopt what some researchers regard as a useful distinction, between methodology and methods. The former is regarded as being to do with the values, principles and assumptions underlying the researchers' approach to their subject; the latter referring to the particular, and relatively ideologically free, processes of data collection (Gouldner, 1971; Burgess et al, 1981; Halpin et al, 1994).

In this particular research it can be argued that external validity is not critical. In one sense the prime purpose is not so much to generalise to other Catholic schools, but to understand the enormous, and unexpected, disparity between these particular institutions. It might be that one is simply a very good school academically, the other extremely poor, irrespective of any Catholic characteristics. On the other hand, the investigation may show that certain ways of understanding and implementing the principles of Catholic education have supportive or detrimental effects on academic achievement. The extent to which any such findings could be generalised might usefully be addressed in a subsequent and more extensive survey since my primary concern is to understand the findings of my quantitative study rather than to actively campaign in any particular direction. However, I recognise that proponents of particular approaches to Catholic education may well use any reliable and valid findings arising from my research for their own policy objectives.

Internal Validity

The question of reliability and the internal validity of any findings is crucial if any study is to have credibility. Though, to some extent, it is only possible to describe events fully if the significance of those events for the participant are clearly understood (Smart, 1969), it has been argued that an individual's views and attitudes and any subsequent actions can only be understood in the light of their particular form of life and within social context (Winch, 1958).

Taking this view to its extreme, it could be argued, that active membership is an essential prerequisite for understanding the social activities of any cultural grouping. I do not entirely accept such an interpretation, since to do so assumes a world of permanent mutual incomprehension between individuals which makes social and intellectual discourse between peoples of differing cultural identities a fundamentally fruitless activity. However, I accept that there maybe some truth in the view. My case studies of the two Catholic

schools, therefore, should be considered, not only against the background of my own Catholic perceptions but also in the light of the official Church view of Catholic education that I have included in the previous chapter.

I was born into a Catholic family. I am a practising, educated and reasonably well read Catholic layman, but have no claims to being a philosopher or theologian, to hold any authoritative insights about Catholic doctrine or to be a Catholic intellectual. As such, I take a relatively uncomplicated view of my Catholic life, accepting the idea that God is the centre and focus of human existence without undertaking any exhaustive intellectual investigation of the notion. I accept that there are truths beyond human understanding and that it is through revelation and the person of Jesus of Nazareth that we know of God. I accept official Catholic teaching about human nature, free will, natural law and the teaching authority of the Church expressed through the magisterium. I am, what could be called, an orthodox, traditional Catholic rather than a progressive or a faithful dissenter. If a caricature of my religious journalistic reading habits is at all helpful in providing an insight into my research stance, it can be said that, on the whole, I find the attitude of the Catholic Times towards Church teaching and the authority of the magisterium more congenial than that of The Tablet. In matters educational, again, if it is possible to apply meaningful labels, I hold traditional rather than progressive views about the role of teachers and their relationship with pupils. In ethical matters I am an absolutist. That is, I believe there are moral absolutes, though I accept they might not yet be known, and I am sceptical about the emphasis placed on personal autonomy, freedom and individuals 'working out their lives for themselves' which characterises the politically liberal, relativist or pluralist stance. As such, I believe that it is both acceptable and proper in a liberal, pluralistic society for religious communities to make claims about their conception of the ideal society and the good life and seek to promulgate that view in an attempt to preserve and develop their specific, religiously based, cultural identity.

I have spent my working life in Catholic schools and am committed to their success both as religious, social and intellectual institutions. I began this research in the hope and expectation that I would find they achieved the educational goals set for them by the Church in terms of the academic attainment and religious socialisation of their pupils. Overall, I have spent in excess of four years on this study, combining qualitative and quantitative techniques. To some extent, this was because of the additional work arising out of the conflicting findings of the initial quantitative research, but also because of the inevitable delays caused by my being a part-time student. As such, it was sometimes difficult to maintain momentum and follow up interesting observations as quickly as I would have liked. On the other hand, my employment within the small Executive Secretariat of a Catholic Diocesan Schools Commission (DSC) gives me certain advantages that are often not normally available to a social researcher in the field of Catholic education (Spencer, 1967; Hastings, 1989; Arthur, 1993). As an officer of the DSC I was able to obtain easy access to the Catholic schools, to large quantities of information about them from diocesan archives, and also to the officers of the local authority who provided a useful source against which I was able to test my perceptions and findings.

The DSC has the responsibility of implementing the Ordinary's educational policies in the Catholic maintained schools within the diocese. It is responsible for the construction, improvement, adaptation and sometimes closure of Catholic school buildings. It also works with LEAs, the Funding Agency for Schools (FAS) and the Further Education Funding Council (FEFC) to plan the provision of education and other matters affecting Catholic schools. It appoints foundation governors on behalf of the Ordinary, is responsible for their training and works with them on the appointment of staff, particularly at headteacher and deputy headteacher level. It provides legal advice to Catholic schools, negotiates with the various teachers' associations on such matters as contracts of

employment, disciplinary, grievance and re-deployment procedures, and gives advice on the formulation of school policy documents arising out of government legislation. In short, its function, within the dual system set up by the Education Act 1944, is to manage at the macro level all matters that have particular relevance to, or impact upon, the distinctive nature and purpose of Catholic schools in much the same way that local authorities administer county schools. However, whereas county schools administrators are directly responsible to the local elected members, diocesan commissioners are responsible to the Ordinary of the diocese.

The Executive of the Diocesan Schools Commission has, as the name suggests, executive authority to establish and carry out policy decisions. The staffing structure is in seven layers. The first is that of Executive Secretary, a priest with administrative but not direct educational expertise or training. The second layer of Deputy Secretary is staffed by two laymen, with extensive experience and training as professional educators at school level. I am one of two staff at that second level of authority and responsibility. Since 1992, my role has involved a great deal of work with the local authority to which the two schools are located. That involvement has generated a high degree of trust and confidence which has given me access to information that might not have otherwise been available to a researcher. In addition, much of the normal routine of collaborative work between the Commission and local authority has directly and specifically involved the two Catholic schools that are the subject of the case studies.

With some justification, therefore, it could be argued my involvement in them is already that of a participant observer, or at least a participant in certain activities within the school while also observing some of their activities. The nature of my occupation requires me to seek to influence the institutions in a variety of ways. For example, I am involved in proposals for the removal of surplus places and changing the age of transfer within the

county. Both issues are having a noticeable impact on the two schools. Other examples include my work with governors to prepare them for, and assist them in, the appointment of a new headteacher at one of the schools, and the development of a sixth form at the other. My regular discussions with LEA officers, governors and senior staff about the strengths, weaknesses, current and future developments of both schools also have an effect. They cannot be neutral influences.

I was the headteacher of one of the schools for nine years. Consequently, I have a degree of involvement which, it could be argued, may cloud my judgement of events that took place, or lead me to view them with an excessively rosy hue. Although there are limitations in the value of personal reports of one's own actions, it would be unwise to discount them, even though memories can become distorted by time and subsequent events (Pring, 1978c). They are essential tools for researchers to obtain understanding of the intentions of the articulators of a school's vision, even if they are not always realised. My induction to headship took place in the second of the schools I have studied, and during the eight years while I was its headteacher I was involved, on a frequent but intermittent basis, as a colleague and collaborator with its successive headteachers. Consequently, I know aspects of it very well. In addition, giving a separate perspective, different members of my immediate family have attended each of the schools as pupils. However, because of my knowledge and involvement outside the direct role of researcher, most useful though it is, I have to try to neutralise my personal views and biases as far as possible, avoiding temptations to triumphalism in respect of the academically effective school and an over censorious view of the other, even if it may be impossible to achieve complete purification (Woods, 1986, p.9).

I decided against adopting the classical role of participant observer in the manner, for example, of Elizabeth Richardson at Nailsea school (Richardson, 1973). I am recognised

within both schools by large numbers of adults and some of the pupils. Consequently, it would be difficult to combine the necessary detachment with the degree of empathy, naturalness or trust with respondents that someone who had no previous contact with the schools might have been able to achieve and which are sometimes regarded as essential for ethnographic research. On the other hand, by adopting a non-participant role, I avoided 'going native' and finding my perspective as a researcher being submerged (Woods, 1968, pp. 36-40). Given my previous and current involvement, this possibility was always a serious danger.

Investigative Methods, Techniques and Strategies

Research Location and Access

I chose the particular local authority for my research for several reasons. The first was that of convenience. Its proximity enabled easy access to a number of schools so maximising the amount of time that could be spent working with headteachers and other parties relevant to the overall enquiry. In addition, for both the initial investigation and these subsequent case studies, my occupation and background ensured greater access to the institutions and persons from whom I wanted to collect data than might otherwise have been possible. In the case of the initial quantitative I was well known to the local authority and to all the headteachers of the schools involved. Those existing relationships provided a level of trust and openness that might not have been forthcoming for research designed to identify particularly effective and ineffective schools. However, I was aware that such familiarity can also have effects on the degree of detachment required of a researcher and highlight certain ethical dilemmas

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Ethical Issues - Confidentiality

I used both explicitly open and some hidden or unknown methods of data collection. By unknown, I mean that some data were collected unknown to the individual schools either

because they came from LEA sources or from the DSC. In his description of the ethical debate in the USA concerning data collection, Burgess (1985) notes the general assumption that characterises open researchers as those who tell the truth, fully inform individuals about what they are doing, honestly report their findings and never harm their respondents or put them at risk. Those who use hidden or covert methods, on the other hand, are portrayed as spies, liars, invaders of privacy and damaging both to individuals and social science research in general (Burgess, 1985, p. 139). On the other hand, he notes Roth's observation that, all research is secret to some degree as researchers never tell subjects everything (Roth, 1961, pp. 283 - 284). In my case it was not a question of honesty or deliberate deceit but that it was not always appropriate to pass to the schools details of the data I was able to obtain from the LEA and DSC since it was often confidential, and to do so may have damaged future relationships between the schools, some individuals and those two organisations.

In the initial quantitative stages of the project I used an orthodox, open and explicit approach. Written permission to undertake the research was obtained from the local education authority and the individual schools. The purpose and nature of the initial investigation and the level of access to records and personnel that was required was clearly explained by letter and repeated verbally when schools were visited. All schools and individuals were assured of the confidentiality of my research findings, in the sense that they would not be identified by name, though headteachers were warned it might be possible for anyone who was familiar with the local authority to guess which schools formed the basis of the investigation. Indeed, given that I was the former headteacher of one of the schools, and that my name would appear on the thesis when submitted, there was no possibility that absolute anonymity could be preserved. My findings, in the form of a graph showing the relative effectiveness of all the schools in the sample, but with only their own identified, were passed back to the headteachers. The two Catholic schools were

subsequently asked if it would be possible to undertake follow-up work with them. The others were thanked for their participation and told that they would not be involved in further research.

The change in my focus had certain methodological benefits. Because of my direct involvement arising from my employment I had a role beyond that of researcher or participant observer in the two Catholic schools. In order to sustain ease of access over the period of my case studies, I adopted an approach which marked me as being in the centre of the covert/open spectrum of researcher. While I was very open about the fact that I was researching the two schools, my methods of data collection and sources of information were often unknown to them. On the other hand, they were not deliberately hidden, in the sense that I denied making use of the sources that the schools knew were available to me, so, perhaps, it would be more correct to say they were aware of my research role at all times but during of my regular involvement with them as a DSC officer it was not always obvious.

My position gave me greater access to a wider spectrum of information and views than might have otherwise been the case. For example, I had access to school documentation stretching over a number of years, including information not in the public domain, such as confidential governors minutes and correspondence between the school and the Commission. These covered a range of matters concerned with the running of the school, such as discussions about issues of staff discipline, appointments and interview notes, possible school restructuring that sometimes never progressed beyond the initial discussion stages and records of meetings that provided me with insights that would probably not have been available to another researcher. While my position vis-a-vis the schools provided fertile ground for information, I had to take great care in its use to avoid exposing individuals who had spoken or written to the Commission on the assumption of

confidentiality. On the other hand, the substance of some those communications were often illuminating of the practices adopted by the two schools.

The Changing Nature of the Project

It was expected that the initial quantitative study would identify a small number of particularly effective schools, among which would be the Catholic institutions, and a similar number of ineffective ones. The second part of the study would attempt to identify differences between Catholic and non-Catholic schools which might highlight specifically Catholic practices contributing to their expected greater academic effectiveness. Because the two Catholic schools were found to be at opposite ends of the academic effectiveness continuum, I changed the emphasis of the follow-up study slightly. Instead of concentrating directly upon relative levels of academic effectiveness, I decided to present the investigate to the schools as a study of the ways in which they implement their understanding of Catholic education. By using this approach I could compare Catholic practices to see in what ways, if any, they might influence the differing levels of academic effectiveness.

The change in focus had the secondary advantage of overcoming any potential defensiveness or resistance on the part of respondents in the one school that might have developed if they felt I was trying to 'prove' their apparent ineffectiveness. For the academically effective school, the change produced a more neutral atmosphere which enabled respondents to be more open about, and perhaps critical of, an institution of which I had been the headteacher, without seeming to be critical of me or of their part in promoting academic effectiveness. The altered emphasis of the research also served to focus respondents' attention towards descriptive rather than judgmental comments about school processes. However, it also meant that I was not as open during the case studies as I had been for the initial study.

Because of the potential difficulties outlined above, and also because to some extent I was more concerned with the effects of the two schools' interpretation of Catholic principles than to learn people's feelings, views and perceptions of them, I decided to stay largely outside the institutions and made extensive use of school documentation of all sorts and a limited number of quite formal interviews. While the use of interviews is quite common, some ethnographers argue against formality, suggesting that one should strive for an empathetic conversation or discussion (Woods, 1986, pp. 62; 67). However, because I was well known as an outsider, but having authority to influence the schools' future (and possibly, by implication, the respondents'), I adopted the more formal strategy that was likely to be assigned to me; namely something akin to a school adviser.

Validation of Accounts

I obtained permission to use documentary information held by both schools, the LEA and the DSC. The data collected includes extensive archive material held by the diocese, school documentation such as minutes of governors meetings, staff handbook, prospectus, letters to parents, pupil records and other similar sources from within the schools, together with local authority data of such items as pupils exclusions, financial records, school visits by subject and pastoral advisers and inspection reports. I made extensive use of school documentation, most of which was in the public domain, though my analysis of it was never discussed openly with either school.

Woods (1986) argues that items, such as the school prospectus and handbook, form, perhaps, the most important component of a school process. Consequently, they are a good indication of the ethos the school is trying to cultivate. Citing Scarth (1985) in support of his view, he suggests that while the picture they give "may be slightly larger than life ... it may be essential to have this ideal official view as the baseline comparative element in one's research" (Woods, 1986, p. 95).

My involvement with school governors, individual teachers, officers of the local authority and the DSC provided many occasions when the two schools were discussed, sometimes together but usually separately. Such discussions, together with personal observations, were a source of information recorded in a fieldwork diary either at the time or as soon as possible afterwards. Much, though not all of the diary material, can be regarded as hidden data collection, in the sense that I was not always directly involved in research at the time. For example, while attending governors meetings as a representative of the DSC, matters relevant to the research project often came to light and were subsequently recorded in my diary. However, in such circumstances my status was always openly acknowledged so others knew to whom they were speaking, even if they were not aware which 'hat' I was wearing at any one time. In some instances, officials were asked to record their views in writing to supplement my fieldwork diary notes and agreed to do so.

All information was used both as a primary source of data and also as a means of validating respondents' views as well as my own analysis. Wherever possible, I adopted a triangulation approach testing any tentative conclusions against evidence from a number of sources. For example, information from diocesan archives would be given particular weight if it received corroboration from internal school sources or from the LEA.

Data Collection and Recording

In the formal interviews I concentrated on gathering or checking information about the internal processes the schools have adopted. Having explained that I was concerned with the way the school implemented its philosophy of Catholic education, I used a semi-structured interview technique, recording in writing answers verbatim, as far as possible. The approach was chosen because it placed fewest restrictions upon the content or the manner of reply of the respondents. I interviewed both adults and pupils using similar but not identical open ended questions in each case, starting with questions asking for a

description of the school. The selection of subsequent questions depended upon the way in which the initial answers are framed. Examples of both schedules are included in appendix 2. My choice of interviewees, like many of the observations that I recorded in my diary, was an opportunistic rather than a statistically random sample which may affect the balance of views that I obtained. However, recognising the potential for distortion, and in order to achieve as wide a range of opinion as possible, the following minimum number of people were interviewed in both schools:

- *The senior member of the school's senior management team*
- *Three teachers: each at different levels of seniority within the school staffing structure*
- *Three governors: the senior cleric, a foundation governor and an elected parent governor*
- *One LEA officer with direct experience of the school*
- *Two parents: having at least four years knowledge of the school*
- *Six pupils: three girls and three boys, having at least four years experience of the school.*

Information derived from the interviews was added to data from documentary sources, personal recollections and notes recorded in my field work diary. These were made as close to the time of observation as possible since it was not always appropriate to make them openly, especially when involved in general or passing conversation. All recorded data were coded and dated to ensure easy and systematic identification when referencing the extracts which are included in the case study text.

I adopted the following system for recording all documentation, coded by school;

St. Peter's	PET
St. Paul's	PAU

and by type of material;

diocesan Archive	ARC
private Letters	LTR

my personal Papers	PER
school Documentation	DOC
Minutes of meetings	MIN
formal Interviews	INT
Fieldwork notes/discussions	FLD

In addition, each was dated and numbered. The documentation is referenced, therefore, by a coding indicating the nature of the source, the school to which it applies and a specific identification within the general classification. For example, private correspondence concerning St. Peter's sent to me in 1986 might be coded PET/LTR.001, 1986.

Research Parameters

It is not possible to research everything about an institution even when adopting a purely idiographic methodology. In this case I am using qualitative methods to research one particular aspect of two individual schools, in the hope that by means of an intensive study of a limited aspect of their work, a theoretical basis for comparisons and generalisations in other Catholic schools can be established. My study considers the schools in relation to a theoretical framework which couples the major traditions in British educational thought and practice which has produced two distinct models or general theories of education labelled 'traditional' and 'progressive' (Moore, 1978) together with the similarly labelled models of Catholic education that can arise out of different interpretations of the conciliar and post-conciliar documents of the Second Vatican Council.

The traditional educational model is one in which:

- *existing human culture and its transmission is seen as primarily important*
- *the role of human knowledge for its own sake is emphasised*
- *teachers are regarded primarily as repositories of knowledge*
- *the role of teachers is to give or transmit their skills and knowledge to pupils*
- *schools tend to be teacher dominated*

In Catholic terms the traditional model is one which:

- *schools comprise a Catholic faith community*
- *schools are expected to sustain and develop Catholic cultural identity*
- *catechesis, faith nurturing or formation in faith is the school's prime purpose*

The progressive or liberal view of education regards schools as places which:

- *emphasise the development of self realised personality and personal autonomy*
- *has a world view in which humanity and personal well-being dominate*
- *is pupil centred and responds to their interests*
- *uses knowledge as a means of developing the individual for its own needs and purposes*
- *regards teachers as facilitators, helpers, or organisers of pupils' learning*

In a Catholic context the progressive view:

- *emphasises religious freedom*
- *emphasises personal and individual response to the gift of faith*
- *adopts a missionary rather than maintenance role*
- *is ecumenical in outlook and purpose*

My analysis of the data is made within the above theoretical framework and is rooted in the conciliar and post-conciliar documents of the Second Vatican Council. It takes into account the document Evaluating the Distinctive Nature of a Catholic School from the Co-ordinating Committee for In-Service, Evaluation and Appraisal in Catholic Schools (Bishops Conference, 1988; 1994). In addition, it takes into account the characteristics of effective schools discussed in chapter 2 and the key elements that I discussed in chapter 5; namely Catholic culture, its sense of community and its methods for developing and maintaining social cohesion.

CHAPTER 7

SAME MISSION, SAME METHODS?

A CASE STUDY OF TWO CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

Introduction

As I returned to the interview room after the governors' deliberations formally to be offered the post of headteacher at St Peter's, my joy was difficult to hide. Not only had I won the 'leadership contest', but it was for a school of which I knew I would enjoy being the headteacher. It would be, without doubt, a good school to lead

Even before the first of the three interviews used in the appointments procedure, I had learned enough to be sure that it was I job I really wanted. I had spent a number of hours finding out all I could about the school both from others and from my own direct observation. Sitting incognito in my car outside the school I had watched staff, pupils and parents arriving and leaving. I had spoken to the school coach drivers. Their responses to my questions about their pupil passengers supported the views of the local shop keepers and estate agents I had talked to. The local reputation of St. Peter's was that of a successful and popular school achieving good academic standards. Pupils were well behaved outside school hours and well disciplined during them, I was told. The education authority's view of its academic standards were consistent with local opinion (PET/ARC, 001, 1985, para. 10) and clearly reinforced the statement made by a chance acquaintance on a course for aspiring headteachers who had told me, "There is a headship in a nice Catholic school near me coming up soon. It is a good school, a bit old fashioned, but has a lot going for it. You ought to apply. It would suit you." He was right. Once appointed I felt St. Peter's did suit me and that I suited the school. Perhaps we were both a bit old fashioned. It was only in September 1985 when I took up the post, however, that I began to realise what being a headteacher really entailed.

My first impressions of St. Peter's confirmed its local reputation as a good school with no major or obvious difficulties. Since it did not seem to require drastic changes but rather a process of gradual development and improvement, I assumed that headship was a process of simply administering a successful going concern on a day-to-day basis and making small adjustments. In reality, as I came to understand, the task was to sustain and develop a religious institution providing Catholic education and supporting the cultural identity of the local Catholic community. I had never been formally trained or prepared for such a role. True, I had spent nearly all my life, certainly all my working life, in Catholic schools but, possibly because I had worked in, as it were, functioning institutions, it seldom occurred to me, or anyone else I knew, to understand how the supposedly distinctive nature and purposes of Catholic schools were established, sustained or developed. For me, their nature and function had simply always been part of my working background whose philosophies and strategies, both explicit and implicit, I had unconsciously absorbed. Fortunately, I had a little theoretical knowledge, gained by reading appropriate texts in preparation for the interview. For example, I had closely read The Catholic School (Garrone, 1977) prepared by the Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education at the Vatican and written a review of Lay Catholics in Schools: Witnesses to Faith (Baum, 1982), also prepared in Rome, for the Diocesan Catechetical Centre Newsletter. They provided me with some insight into the general principles to be followed, which I quoted in my interview (PET/PER.005, p. 9, 1985), but they did not indicate specific means for their implementation and the development of a distinctive Catholic ethos at St. Peter's.

Moreover, I had given little thought to the distinctive nature of Catholic education and, though I did refer it in my interview (PET/PER.005, 1985), I had not been asked at any stage to explain in detail my understanding of how it could be developed. My thoughts had not gone very far beyond a general belief that pupils needed to be taught about the

Catholic faith and also experience the reality of a Catholic community living out that faith on a daily basis (PET/PER.012, p.2, 1992).

I had a clearer understanding about the way I intended to tackle the other developmental issues facing the school. To some extent these were issues facing all schools and, initially at least, did not seem to have much to do with clearly thought out Catholic principles. From the information I had gleaned from my interviews and the literature given to me, together with impressions gained through a series of planned conversations with staff in the months before taking up my appointment, I was fairly confident I knew the areas in which I wanted improvements at St. Peter's, but equally confident that there were no major deficiencies at the school.

As the seriousness and centrality of the Catholicity question dawned I was helped by three events. The first was the simple imperative of making decisions on a daily basis. Since I could not avoid making decisions, however insignificant they appeared on the surface, I was establishing precedent and more importantly displaying my values and attitudes. What had been for so many years an series of dimly conscious attitudes were now important leadership tools. Because I wanted to appear consistent, which necessitated my holding constant values, there was an enormous incentive for me to develop a clear, rational and coherent vision. That need was brought home in my first staff meeting when I was asked how I was going to develop the Catholicity of the school. I had no answer since I had never really considered it a question. In my experience Catholic schools were a fact of life and their Catholicity was inherent in their existence. I avoided detailing what I intended to do. How could I do otherwise? I simply had no idea how it could be achieved.

The second event was being invited to attend a twenty day management course in 1986, shortly after my appointment, which was held at a Catholic college of education. It was

funded by the Department of Education and Science (DES) and entitled "Leadership for Headteachers and Aspirant Heads in Voluntary Schools". In subsequent years I became involved as a course leader and later as an evaluator when it was repeated for other groups.

The third was to be assigned as my mentor by the LEA an experienced Catholic headteacher of a nearby Catholic comprehensive school, St. Paul's, whose reputation I already knew. I was aware that he given a great deal of thought to the nature of Catholic education and he had put his ideas into practice over a number of years. The two schools, though both comprehensive, had differing backgrounds and traditions. Nevertheless, the views expressed by the headteacher of St. Paul's, and the ways in which he implemented his understanding of its purpose, provided a source of great interest for me both at the time of my appointment and subsequently.

My participation, in different capacities, in the DES management courses and the quite extensive period of mentoring by the headteacher of St. Paul's, during which I spent several days shadowing him at work in his school, provided valuable learning and insight into ways in which I could solve the task I had acquired when I became headteacher of St. Peter's. They required me to analyse and understand the underlying principles of Catholic education, to consider how they differed from secular interpretations and to investigate appropriate mechanisms for implementing a religious purpose within the legislative constraints of the state education system.

Both experiences provided a significant formative influence on my thinking and the practices I adopted in my attempt to mould St. Peter's over the following eight years of my headship. The circumstances and opportunities for my learning about Catholic headship also provided an important basis of understanding and knowledge of St. Paul's,

adding data for this comparative study of two Catholic schools though, of course, I was unaware at the time that the information would be used for such a purpose.

Setting The Scene: A Brief History of the Two Schools

Introduction

The starting point of this research was a snapshot quantitative investigation based on the academic performance of comprehensive schools in the academic year 1991-92. These subsequent case studies, which illuminate the performance of the two Catholic schools in the original sample, concentrate on understanding their culture round about that time.

However, institutions and their characters are influenced and sustained not only by their particular location and surroundings, but also by their history (Harvanek, 1975). Further, the conscious changes that individuals make in an attempt to chart an institution's future path cannot help but be affected by past decisions that have themselves partly formed the present circumstances. Consequently, careful consideration needs to be given to temporal and geographical influences on the two schools for, despite their similar designation as comprehensive, they had achieved that status in very different ways which, it can be argued, influences the way they approach their educative task and their effectiveness in achieving it.

Two Catholic Schools

St Peter's had started its life as an elementary school serving the population of Riverside in a small, mainly industrial, town in the north of Loamshire. Following discussions between the Church authorities and the Director of Education of the county in 1939, it was proposed to establish a senior school to educate the older Catholic pupils in the town together with others who would transfer from two smaller neighbouring towns approximately five miles away. The Second World War prevented early implementation, but the plan was resurrected in 1944 as war neared its end, and came to fruition in 1946,

the Education Committee "providing conveyance for the children affected, by means of bicycles or a grant in lieu" (PAU/PET/ARC.001, 1944). Catholic education of senior pupils in and around Wellchester, located close to the county town of Loamer in the more affluent and rural central area of Loamshire, continued to be given in a number of dispersed elementary schools.

A period of great expansion of Catholic education between 1952 and 1966 saw developments in both areas (PAU/PET/ARC.002, 1967). A secondary modern school was built on a new site in Riverside replacing the old St. Peter's Elementary School which had provided Catholic education in the town. Two new secondary schools were built to serve the Catholic population of Wellchester and Loamer. One was designated a modern school. It was located on the southern side of Wellchester just inside the county town boundary and was completed in 1957. The other, a grammar school, located on the opposite side of Wellchester, opened in 1966. Together, they were intended to serve the Catholic population of a large part of the southern and central areas of the county. In 1974, the county re-organised its educational system along more comprehensive lines. As a by-product, St Peter's transferred to another site in Riverside. The secondary modern and grammar schools in Wellchester and Loamer were amalgamated and renamed St. Paul's Comprehensive School, though remaining on the two original sites some mile and a half apart. While St. Paul's retained the former grammar school sixth form when it became a comprehensive school, the pattern of schooling in Riverside made no provision for Catholic education beyond the age of sixteen.

The Two Schools - The Headteacher's Perspective

Introduction

It is likely that every headteacher on their appointment has some pre-conceived ideas as to the ideal school and, therefore, some plans, however tentative, ready for implementation.

Nevertheless, the idealism must always be tempered by established realities. Unless a headteacher is opening a brand new school, decisions as to their intentions and future actions are inevitably influenced by their perceptions of the existing attitudes and practices that they find when they first take up their post.

St. Peter's

My predecessor, an Irishman of working class background, had spent 20 years teaching in a wide variety of Catholic schools before his appointment in 1967 as headteacher of St. Peter's, then a small three form entry secondary modern school. He described it as:

"very non-selective because Riverside was unusual for its size in having two grammar and one bi-lateral schools, plus a large [new] comprehensive nearby. The staff must have been eighty-eighty-five per cent Catholic, all Riversideians, and a non-Catholic pupil a rarity" (PET/LTR/007, 1995, para. 2).

Following his decision to retire at the end of the academic year 1984-85, the post was advertised. Literature accompanying the application forms for the headship of St. Peter's describes the school as one of seven 12-16 comprehensive schools serving Riverside as part of a four tier educational system comprising first, middle and secondary schools with post-16 education provided by a sixth form college and a college of technology (PET/ARC.001, para. 5, 6).

Prior to comprehensive reorganisation in Riverside, my predecessor had worked very hard to develop an academic image for St. Peter's, realising that the school had to be 'sold' to parents of able Catholic children who might otherwise choose to send them to the selective schools (PET/LTR.007, 1995, para. 5). That emphasis on providing high academic standards continued after comprehensive re-organisation (PET/LTR.007, 1995, para. 14, 15; PET/FLD.001, 1993), and was evidently an on-going preoccupation with

senior staff when I discussed the school's development with them in the summer term following my appointment but before I took up my post in September 1985.

My visits to the school during the summer term served to reinforce the impressions I had gained before my interviews: it was a purposeful, traditionally organised and teacher dominated school. Academic matters were organised through subject departments, with pastoral matters in the hands of form tutors. There was no formal pastoral hierarchy, the headteacher and deputies dealing with anything referred to them if the tutors felt they could not resolve the difficulty. The proclaimed needs of the English, mathematics and science departments dominated school planning decisions and pupils were streamed according to their ability in English and maths. The school staff seemed to be happy, relaxed and self-confident, at ease with each other and satisfied that they were meeting the aspirations of the majority of parents in respect of academic attainment, levels of discipline and general pupil demeanour. Many of the staff, both teaching and non-teaching, lived in or near to Riverside and sent their children to the school. Pupils had no formal involvement in the running of the school, though there was a traditional prefect system. There was a Parent Teacher Association's whose role was limited by its constitution, and, it appeared, by general agreement, to fund raising and organising social activities.

Despite the emphasis placed on developing an academic reputation within the locality, and the general level of satisfaction within St. Peter's that it had been achieved, I felt that the levels of examination achievement were below the pupils' capabilities. I was convinced that the most able were not as successful as they could be and that too little was expected of many of the less able pupils (PET/DOC.011, para. 4, 1991). For example, my analysis of the examination results for the academic year 1985-86 showed that six per cent of pupils obtained no examination success of any sort and the number of examination successes per pupil at the equivalent of grade C or above was 2.07. Using a system

allocating a score for each examination grade achieved from 7 (highest) to 1 (lowest) gave an average points score per pupil of 25.4. The most academically successful pupil in the year group achieved a points score of 52 from eight examinations. While I did not regard these statistics as particularly impressive, the general consensus amongst the staff was of quiet pride in the level of academic success. Consequently, one of my first priorities was to show that examination performances could be improved, to ensure an increase in the levels of achievement of pupils of all abilities and, specifically, reduce the number of pupils who obtained few or no academic qualifications before leaving school.

My reaction was, in part I believe, a realistic assessment of the academic standards and expectations of St. Peter's. It also reflected my pre-determined and general concern to raise the academic performance of pupils that I had expressed in my letter of application, which, in turn, was a reflection of my previous role as deputy headteacher with responsibility for the curriculum and examinations. To some extent I was implementing policies that had been successful in raising academic standards in my previous school; a simple repetition but with the benefit of hindsight (PET/PER.002, para. 3, 5, 6).

St. Paul's

The first headteacher of St. Paul's had given a great deal of thought to the nature and nurture of Catholic education. From his own account, he was:

"... well read, theologically literate, a traditionally educated public school and Oxford man ... having wide connections within the progressive wing of the Catholic church who visited me regularly or who welcomed my approaches and could be used as sounding boards to enable me to develop within the general umbrella of the Church"
(PAU/PER.001, para. 14, 1993).

He was greatly influenced by the Second Vatican Council and its teachings. He had been appointed to open a new Catholic grammar in 1966 Recognising that Catholic education

was a religious activity, he set out to translate the conciliar documents into action, "particularly the Declaration on Religious Freedom" (*Dignitatis Humanae*, 1965). He set himself the task of "creating a new type of Catholic school" with a distinctive educational philosophy, the fundamental basis of which was the quality of personal relationships between teacher and taught (PAU/PER.001, paras. 13, 20-24, 1993). He remained as its headteacher for the next twenty two years during which it amalgamated with Wellchester's Catholic secondary modern school expanding into a large comprehensive school of approximately twelve hundred pupils. The extent of his influence on the school's development was quite remarkable. It was very much his creation and, claim Diocesan Commissioners, became a vehicle for the implementation of his idiosyncratic views on Catholic education to a much greater extent than any other headteacher in the diocese before or since (PAU/FLD.014, p. 2, 1994; PAU/FLD.029, p. 3-5, 1995).

He presented a case study of the school at a conference I attended in 1993, describing its development from its origins as a Catholic grammar school in 1966 to his retirement in 1988. This paper provides an important source of his personal perspective of the underlying reasons for the development of its particular Catholic ethos. It describes a continuous evolution as the grammar school developed, though it makes no reference to the amalgamation of two schools in 1974 or the impact of his Catholic grammar school based philosophy on the established Catholic secondary modern school either at the time of their amalgamation or subsequently. The lack of any comment by him suggests that it raised few problems. Possible reasons may be that there was little difference between the two schools before amalgamation, that they developed a common identity and culture more quickly than is often the case or that they remained much of their existing character. Notes in my fieldwork diary and statements made during interviews point to a difference in the status and atmosphere on the two buildings, perhaps encouraged by a policy which allocated incoming pupils to one or other of the two sites on the basis of their home

location. Within the area served by St. Peter's this produced a socially segregated intake which suggests that the resultant new school did not necessarily achieve the clarity and uniformity of purpose that the headteacher implies in his paper. Whatever the reality in the early days St. Paul's existence, at the time of my study the two sites are generally regarded as having a different status and atmosphere, though respondents have contradictory views about what they might be. The site some describe as warm and welcoming others call dirty, neglected and depressing. (PAU/FLD.005, 1994; PAU/LEA.001, pp. 7, 19a, 1995; PAU/INT.008, 1995).

Once the schools were amalgamated school, the headteacher claims it achieved very high levels of success in worldly terms, with "a far higher proportion [of pupils] than primary school test scores would predict" entering and succeeding in higher education, and suggests its "trail blazing" national educational reputation was possibly a "spin-off from its Catholicity". However, he also notes that it was not regarded particularly highly by the bishops of the diocese though he does not specify or speculate on possible reasons for their antipathy (PAU/PER.001, para. 69, 1993).

His perception of a negative attitude towards St. Paul's from the Church authorities is confirmed by my interviews with diocesan officers and also in a study which commented upon a dispute at the time of his successors appointment in 1987 (Arthur, 1994). Reasons for diocesan concern centred on the low numbers of Catholic pupils in the school and the style of religious teaching. Arthur notes:

The issue [under dispute] concerned the appointment of a new headteacher since the then incumbent was retiring ... [and] an attempt by the diocese to alter the ethos of the school and impose a stricter, more 'traditional' Catholic system. There were no compulsory or regular religious education lessons in the school. ... The headteacher justified the school's policy by reference to his own personal interpretations of the documents of Vatican II. However, these omissions

contravened both the 1944 Education Act and the Trust Deeds of the school ... In addition the school had a majority of non-Catholics on roll due to the operation of an open admissions policy" (Arthur, 1994)

Unlike the position at St. Peter's when I was appointed, the change in headship at St. Paul's in 1988 excited great controversy. The retiring headteacher was accepted by all as a charismatic and powerful figure, though opinion as to his merits was divided. Many felt his policies and style of leadership had developed a most successful and appropriate Catholic education for Wellchester (PAU/LEA.001, p.12, 1995). Others wondered whether he was a suitable person ever to have been a headteacher (PAU/FLD.011, p. 4, 1994). All are agreed that he dominated the school in all its aspects and staff who were appointed by him, or worked under him, use similar descriptive phrases of him whether in praise or condemnation.

"[He was] a tyrant, a father with a big stick. People miss the big stick. They would like it back ... [He] was like God ... [He was also] a bully of parents, staff, kids ... " (Teacher), (PAU/LEA.001, p. 7, 1995).
"[The school ethos] was clear before it was written because [the former headteacher] was the boundaries" (Teacher), (PAU/LEA.001, p. 12, 1995).
"I came here as a student. [The headteacher then was] a dictator, I wouldn't have wanted to work for him", (Teacher), (PAU/LEA.001, p. 25, 1995).

While I was generally happy with the style and nature of the relationships that I found at St. Peter's and did not see any need for drastic change, the new headteacher at St. Paul's was much more critical of the school he inherited and of the influence of his predecessor. His criticism centres on the leadership style that had been adopted throughout the school and its effects on teacher and pupil attitudes. While I was concerned with academic standards and, by implication, the quality, style and effectiveness of academic teaching, his priority for change was the nature of Catholic leadership and, arising from that concern, relationships between staff, between staff and pupils, and between staff and governors.

St. Paul's new headteacher is a former head of religious education. On taking up his post in 1988, he saw an urgent need for significant changes in the emphasis and nature of the school's ethos. However, he accepts the academic organisation and educational thrust of his predecessor's policies which, consequently, does not have the highest priority in his strategy for school development and improvement. His educational views are rooted in his subject discipline of religious education and greatly influenced by Jean Vanier, the founder of the L'Arche communities for the mentally handicapped, Henri Nouwen and Dom John Main, all of which are important twentieth century spiritual leaders. He particularly admires the way in which they champion a form of inclusive community in which everyone is valued and cared for. He describes himself as being "categorised as a liberal Catholic" by others (PAU/INT.001, para. 203, 1994). In contrast to his reservations of the validity of the tag given to him, he is happy to call himself a liberal in respect of his educational philosophy.

"I'm certainly liberal in the sense of [having] a liberal philosophy of education and a rather romantic philosophy of education in the fullest sense of the word, as in the old Froebel tradition" (PAU/INT. 001, para. 203-207, 1994)

He says he has been fascinated since his student days with the concept of Catholic education and how it could be made to work in practice. He describes his interest as both a hobby and an all consuming passion (PAU/INT.001, para. 237-239, 1994) and notes that he has always challenged the institutions where he has worked to live out the values proclaimed in the Gospels (PAU/INT. 001, para. 241-244, 1994). Perhaps it is unsurprising, therefore, that his concerns are primarily with the school's social ethos rather than its levels of academic achievement, and that he accepts the existing emphasis on pupil autonomy and freedom of choice. Given his perceptions of the school he inherited, that concern has become the most significant priority for change as he puts his vision of Catholic education into practice.

In common with his predecessor he affirms the underlying importance of the quality of personal relationships within the school. He regards them both as a testament to Catholic values and as a fundamental reason for parents choosing to send their children to St. Paul's (PAU/INT.001, paras. 179-194, 292-310, 1994; PAU/ARC.004. para. 1, 1993).

However, while accepting the same principles he is scathing in his views of the nature of the community he found on his appointment and has become determined to change it.

"What I inherited, basically, was a school which claimed to be Catholic; which claimed it based itself on the best of the teachings of Vatican II vis-a-vis education; which claimed to be a child centred school and in which children were right at the centre. In reality what I found was a school which was extremely arrogant; which had been ruled tyrannically for want of a better word; that ... had become like a private fiefdom; that was operated by a male oligarchy; that was ... a closed system, sufficient to itself; and in other ways tried to set itself apart as something different from mainstream Catholic institutions and I think in a way that was its undoing because, in fact, what it degenerated into, I believe, was a cult and a cult based on a personality, my predecessor"

(PAU/INT/001, para. 21 - 37).

In no way could this claim to be a Catholic school where the Kingdom [of God] was being lived. There was a lot of rhetoric around but the reality ... for staff was one of lack of liberation, a control and a form of manipulation which I find professionally offensive and humanely enslaving. ... As regards the youngsters, yes, it was a child-centred place; ... But it was all controlled from the top"

(PAU/INT/001, para. 48 - 60).

"I don't think that [St. Paul's] was a normal headship ... sometimes I used to think it was a sinful situation that I inherited"

(PAU/INT/001, para. 693; 709).

The inherited tensions he describes became very evident as his tenure progressed. I noted them quite clearly on a number of occasions, particularly during governors meetings. One possible cause was suggested to me by a long-serving and senior member of staff who argues that the absence of the previous headteacher's immensely strong personality created an on-going leadership crisis for St. Paul's:

"When he [the new headteacher] arrived it was as if the school was in some sort of death throes into which he was dropped. No-one should be placed in that

position. It was his purgatory, dealing with the dissension, mistrust and suspicion as well as the in-fighting and manipulation that was rife"
(PAU/FLD.017, p. 1, 1994).

The foci of the headteacher's appraisal in 1994 were the Catholicity of the school and his relationships with governors. This suggests that some of the concerns of his early years as headteacher about the way in which St. Paul's operated were still prominent six years later. The initial tensions over his leadership had not been resolved and difficulties clearly remain (PAU/INT.001, para. 608, 1994; PAU/DOC.011, pp. 15, 17, 19, 1994).

Summary

While the two schools have many similarities, their histories and current size are very different. Though both are comprehensive schools they have acquired their status in different ways. St. Paul's status as a comprehensive school for pupils aged from eleven to eighteen, has its roots in the grammar school tradition catering for pupils from mainly middle class socio-economic backgrounds. St Peter's has developed from a secondary modern school serving a more working class area of the county and, while striving to achieve a grammar school-like academic reputation, has no sixth form.

I am unable to find evidence of any major controversy concerning the development of St. Peter's. Even its physical transfer to a new location in 1974 seems to have been generally and happily accepted. It justifies its reputation as having evolved into a fairly traditional successful small Catholic comprehensive school, is reasonably well regarded within the diocese and has made little impact in educational circles beyond its immediate location. The consensus view of the school at the time I was appointed in 1985 can be characterised as 'its all right'. In other words one of the many schools which are competent but not outstanding. On the other hand, St. Paul's excites very strong but contrary opinions in the diocese and LEA, and among parents and teachers (PAU/DOC.011, p.11, 1994). There is

no consensus view of the school. True, it has a widely spread reputation as a highly successful school which has been a subject of interest for educational academics and the media. On the other hand, my research findings, reported in chapter 4, show it to be ineffective in academic terms. Despite its good academic reputation, which usually weighs heavily with Catholic parents, many of them shun it. The nature of its Catholicity has been a subject of concern with the diocesan authorities for some years, especially in respect of its pupil intake, the lack of time devoted to religious education and the refusal to adopt a diocesan approved syllabus. Consequently, relationships were both distant and very strained prior to 1988. The new headteacher has worked hard to improve those relationships. However, despite its shortcomings in the eyes of the diocesan authorities, for many, St. Paul's represents all that is good and progressive about Catholic education and it enjoys extensive and vocal support from a significant number of parents and staff who are anxious to prevent any changes in the schools' religious and educational ethos (Arthur, 1994; PAU/FLD.010, p. 1, 1994; PAU/FLD.029, p. 1, 1995). Certainly, there are parents who are opposed to any changes in the balance of Catholic and non-Catholic intake (PAU/ARC.003, para. 13, 17) including any attempt aimed to maximise the intake of baptised Catholic pupils or encourage previously hostile Catholic parents within its catchment area to send their children to the school (PAU/FLD.005, 1994; PAU/FLD.007, p. 3, 1994). On the other hand, it has been suggested that St. Paul's is unacceptable to many Catholics (PAU/DOC.009, p. 10, 1994; PAU/FLD.005, 1994), and there is a belief held by some teachers that there is a significant anti-Catholic faction among the staff (PAU/FLD.032, p. 3, 1995; PAU/FLD.024, 1995).

While all schools are products of their history, that truth is hardly ever reflected in comments made about St. Peter's by staff, parents or educational officials. In Riverside, the past events in the school's life are taken for granted. It seems that succeeding headteachers have not been particularly charismatic individuals, unlike the case at St.

Paul's, and there are very few references to their influence on more current issues. On the other hand, the first headteacher of St. Paul's constantly features in conversations and his influence is clearly most relevant to the school's day-to-day functioning eight years after his retirement. For example, just at the end of the period of this study the headteacher obtained a post in another diocese. The debate among governors and officials during the appointment of a successor's focused on ways in which the candidates would deal with the inheritance, not of their immediate predecessor, but of the former headteacher. Such concerns, so many years after his retirement, illustrate the enormous influence, for good or ill, of the ideas and policies of this very charismatic and idiosyncratic figure. Consequently, perhaps more than is usually the case in the majority of maintained schools, the culture of at St. Paul's, though relating to the period around 1992, can only be understood by reference to the period before the appointment of the headteacher in 1988 (PAU/LEA.001, pp. 9a, 10a, 12, 21, 23, 25a, 1995).

Headteacher Priorities and Intentions

Introduction

I argued in chapter 2 that the major factors affecting school effectiveness can be grouped under the three headings, Leadership, Culture and Mission. Further, in chapter 5, I argued that the distinctive nature of Catholic schools is rooted in specific communities and their associated culture which, together, create a form of social cohesion within those schools that is particularly conducive to academic effectiveness. This section of the case study uses this analysis as a framework to examine the attitudes, values and practices of St. Peter's and St. Paul's.

Initially, the intentions of their respective headteachers will be outlined before analysing the impact of their policies on the school's academic effectiveness. While that is the prime concern of the study, I shall also consider other education aims that the headteachers set

themselves arising out of their interpretation of their understanding of Catholic education including their influence on academic achievement.

Partly because of their respective school histories, the main priorities of the two headteachers during the period of this study are very different. At St. Peter's, its background of a stable and relatively cohesive social climate enabled me to concentrate primarily on academic priorities, while the development of its Catholic culture was an evolutionary process with little controversy. In contrast, the turbulent social conditions at St. Paul's ensured that the headteacher's energies were directed towards changing the school's social and religious culture with little time available to devote to its academic organisation and development. However, the personal interests and pre-occupations of the respective headteachers are also important factors.

St Peter's School

Questions concerning objectivity inevitably arise when studying your own actions, not least because of an (un)conscious desire for self-justification. But even if that difficulty is avoided there are other problems. One's memory is not always exact or reliable, often distorting what happened especially if there is a significant time lag between the events and their reporting (Pring, 1978c; Wragg, 1978). Often events will be viewed to the benefit of the reporter's self image, forgetting incidents or pressures that do not support the ideal picture of the person, or the situation, one would wish to have. I cannot claim to be any different.

Though I am the only person who can give an account of my intentions in making any particular decision, it must be accepted that others may infer from my actions motives other than those I believed I had at the time. It must be accepted too that their interpretation can have validity. It is also the case that hindsight gives a clarity of vision

and thought that did not really exist at the time. There are often several, perhaps conflicting, motives behind a decision, sometimes hardly breaking the level of consciousness and now forgotten, but nevertheless significant at the time, some of which could be classed as religious some secular. However, all I can do is to reflect upon my motives and give my understanding of them as clearly and accurately as I can in this review of selected decisions. Where possible, my own perceptions will be tested against data from archive material and the views of interviewees.

The letter I attached to my application form stressed three areas: my rather sketchy understanding of Catholic education, my experience in managing falling rolls and an outline of my vision for the development of the school if appointed (PET/PER.002, 1985). I cannot recall much of the two preliminary interviews, but a large part of the final interview revolved around the final two items I had included in my letter, and on my appointment I assumed that my analysis of the situation and suggested strategy for meeting the school's needs was to be put into practice. During the period between my appointment and taking up the post I visited St. Peter's several times and talked with the senior staff and all heads of department. My impression was that they felt the school was ready for some changes, provided they were not drastic. They had no clear view as to what they should entail, or at least none that anyone was prepared to tell me, but the issues we discussed centred on the academic curriculum and organisation rather than the school's Catholic mission. I assumed, therefore, there was no need to alter my preconceived plans about my first headship, it was simply a case of putting my ideas into operation.

At the staff meeting on my first day I cannot remember what I said, but do recall a question from the most junior of the R.E. department who asked what I was going to do to make the school more Catholic. Totally unprepared for such a direct question, I gave a

reply full of appropriate generalities indicating that I intended to make it a priority and that the ways in which it would be done would gradually emerge. Privately, to myself, while acknowledging it was a proper question for a headteacher, I was acutely aware that I had not considered it in any depth beyond my interview preparation.

While my first priority was to improve the levels of pupil academic attainment, the second was to maintain the school roll and I believed success in the one would greatly improve the chances of achieving the other. At the time of my appointment the numbers of available secondary age pupils in the area was falling. At St. Peter's there were six hundred and forty-seven pupils on roll at the start of the 1984 academic year. In response to the general decline in the number of secondary age pupils the local education authority adopted a policy against closing any secondary schools. This was achieved by limiting admission numbers to create seven separate five form entry schools. It was accepted that some would fall below that size and the local education authority predicted the roll at St. Peter's to reduce to five hundred and forty-three by 1989, with a consequent reduction in staffing levels (PET/ARC.001, para. 8, 9).

However, the most important priority, of which I had little awareness at the time of my appointment, presented the greatest difficulty. It was also the one I was least equipped to implement, namely, developing the school's Catholic identity. The task was to make that Catholic nature explicit though I, and I suspected many others in the school, had given little thought as to the way in which it could be articulated beyond the emphasis given to appointing Catholic staff, attracting Catholic pupils, to religious education lessons and attending school masses (PET/LTR.007, 1995, para. 8, 12, 16). Like my predecessor, my appreciation and understanding of Catholic education had been developed through an osmosis-like process in which I had absorbed ideas and values from the Catholic institutions in which I had learned and taught.

It was on my acceptance onto the DES management course in 1986, which was intended to develop leadership skills for headteachers of denominational schools, that I began to consider the problem systematically. It was the first nationally funded INSET that recognised and addressed itself towards the distinctive nature of denominational education and the particular management issues it created. The course required participants to outline their understanding of the major difficulty facing Catholic schools at that time. I argued that the central issue headteachers had to face was to develop a localised religious community in an increasingly secular society without the large numbers of clergy and religious working in schools that was the case in previous generations (PET/PER.003, 1986). While the concern was rooted in the position I found at St. Peter's, it was also a much wider and more general difficulty I believed existed in the many Catholic secondary school which employed significant numbers of non-Catholic teachers, but one I had previously given little systematic consideration.

St. Paul's

Inevitably, I have less information about the intentions and priorities of the headteacher of St. Paul's than of my own for St. Peter's. What is available comes mainly from a number conversations and interviews with him over a period of six years, but also from papers that he wrote for the teaching staff and from my own observations.

His predecessor sought to develop a new type of Catholic school, radically different to the prevailing model within the diocese (PAU/PER.001, 1993, para. 13). In its daily workings it seemed to separate itself from all other secondary schools, having little contact with the Catholic sector within the county, and taking active steps to distance itself from agencies of the diocese. On his appointment, he has set two priorities to his work at St. Paul's. He wants to overcome the suspicion of the diocese which was endemic within the teaching

staff of St. Paul's and to bring it into more into the mainstream of Catholic tradition using a model that mirrors his analysis of the changing social circumstances of the 1990s.

In an paper discussing the place of Catholic education in today's world he points to:

"... the fact that we are living in a post-Christian or de-Christianised society ... [with] increasing polarisation and fragmentation ... individualism and materialism ... a plurality of belief and moral perspectives within [the Catholic Church's] own faithful ..." (PAU/DOC.005, 1994, para. 2)

Such social trends, he believes, have a profound impact on Catholic schools. He argues that, while there are various legitimate models of Catholic school, his priority is to develop St. Paul's as an "... ecumenical nursery meeting the needs of the Church and society in general" (PAU/INT.001, 1994, para. 7 -12). His reasons for adopting that model are outlined in an document prepared for senior staff entitled "Some Reflections on Catholic Secondary Schools" (PAU/DOC.005, 1994). He argues, very much as his predecessor had done (PAU/PER.001, para. 16, 1993):

"the original purpose of Catholic schools is no longer relevant ... catechesis in our schools cannot be the norm ... [and] Catholic schools have to get away from the ghetto mentality" (PAU/DOC.005, 1994, para. 3).

His alternative concept of Catholic school is that of an ecumenical nursery. The origin of the phrase seems to be a publication by the National Society, an Anglican organisation offering guidance to those responsible for Church of England schools. It is one of ten characteristics which the Society believes should be characteristic of a good Church school. For the National Society, an ecumenical nusery builds from children's fundamental unity a sensitivity to difference, and the faiths of others (Duncan, 1990). For the headteacher of St. Paul's it has the following characteristics.

"Missionary schools are heralds of the Good News we offer in the field of education, announcing and presenting themselves to the whole community and not just the Catholic community ... The Good News within the educational context is the promotion of a person centred education based on a theology and

philosophy of education at odds with and challenging the current politically lead educational ideology ...the context for this process is one of a community based on the values of the Gospel and of the living traditions of the Church"
(PAU/DOC.005, 1994, para. 4)

He wants to develop a school that is engaged, as its primary purpose, in establishing the Kingdom of God (PAU/DOC.011, p.21-22, 1994; PAU/INT.001, 1994, para. 123; 194). In trying to achieve his goal he has continued along a very similar path to that of his predecessor, but using a very different personal management style which seeks consensus not domination. He has adopted a more evolutionary rather than revolutionary stance, trying to carry people with him by dialogue and example, and working with the diocesan authorities in a way that his predecessor had resisted (PAU/FLD.003, p. 3, 1993; PAU/INT.001, para. 628-633, 1994).

Prior to his appointment his practical experience of senior management in schools was limited. He has moved from head of religious education to headship without the, more usual, period as a deputy headteacher, though he completed a Masters degree in educational management shortly before he became the headteacher of St Paul's. He has found the new role difficult, but this is not simply a matter of inexperience of school management. He attributes the major problems to the particular situation he inherited rather than the generic nature of the tasks of leadership. He notes "nothing could have prepared me for the [St. Paul's] headship ... even that [the Masters degree] was insufficient preparation" (PAU/INT.001, 1994, para. 622-625).

Despite his very strong criticisms of the atmosphere within school his predecessor had helped develop, the model that he wants has a similar outward looking religious policy aiming to meet the needs of more than just the Catholic community. The essential differences that he seeks are not educational or organisational changes, but a radical reform of the style of social community that the school had become.

In a series of papers reflecting on leadership in a Catholic school, which he wrote for the staff during a period of illness during 1990, he gives a clear description of his vision of Catholic education and the manner in which he wants to approach his leadership task.

"For me the most important challenge is ... to serve the needs of the individual made in the image and likeness of God [which] demands of us a form of [educational] provision which actively promotes the unfolding of the human personality in its uniqueness and sacredness. ... This means ... a clear focus on students' needs, their growth, development and authentic formation [that] will challenge us to provide a diversity of curriculum underpinned by a community which seeks to see the face of Christ in all its members"

(PAU/DOC.001, 1990, para. 1).

To some extent he is clearly in sympathy with many of his predecessor's educational views, notably in terms of the breadth of curriculum provision which he has retained (PAU/DOC.001, 1990, para. 1) and the child-centred teaching methods he encourages (PAU/DOC.002, 1990, para. 11). He has supported existing policies such as the universal use of first names, no school imposed uniform, an emphasis on personal discipline with gradual diminishing levels of control and supervision of pupils:

"We wish children to learn through relationships to grow into mature adults"
(PAU/DOC.005, p. 1, 1992).

"We try to teach them to take responsibility for their own actions"
(PAU/DOC.005, p. 1, 1992).

"Children do not have to wear a school uniform ... If a child come to school wearing any kind of badge or insignia which may offend others, we will ask for this to be removed"
(PAU/DOC.005 p. 2, 1992).

"[There will be] a gradual, though not necessarily complete, devolution of responsibility for learning from teacher to pupil" (PAU/DOC.005, p. 16, 1992).

"Children should be led to consider for themselves - in a rational, social and autonomous way - what sort of behaviour is acceptable. They must learn to anticipate consequences and justify their actions. For this reason school rules are to be kept to a minimum"
(PAU/DOC.005, p. 17, 1992).

He holds similar views to those of his predecessor on the nature of religious worship, regarding it as a voluntary activity (PAU/DOC.005, pp. 11, 17, 1992). In this respect he

believes it is not something that the school should arrange in the same way as other aspects of the curriculum such as mathematics or English, despite its legal status enshrined in Acts of Parliament. Consequently, in terms of educational attitudes, he regards himself as providing some continuity for the school and describes St. Paul's under his leadership as being only "subtly different from that under [my predecessor]" (PAU/INT.001. para. 564, 1994). Given such opinions, it is no surprise that the nature of the school community and the role of leadership at all levels within the school, rather than the academic structure or pastoral organisation, has become his major preoccupation.

His determination to change the existing management culture is reflected in his conversations and writings. In contrasting his perceptions of the prevailing school leadership style under his predecessor with his own intentions, he argues that, leadership is concerned with and responsible for the growth of others not with:

"manipulation of others for one's own ends, or with control of people for one's own needs for power and domination" (PAU/DOC.002, para. 5, 1990).

His concern that the school community is centred on the nature of human relationships within it, is exemplified in his vision of leadership, which he contrasts with the prevalent style that he found on taking up his post. The thrust of the paper is the expectation and hope that his vision will become the norm for all those who have any form of school leadership role within St. Paul's (PAU/DOC.002, para. 1, 1990).

"In Him [Jesus of Nazareth] I see a vision of leadership that I strive after, one that is in terms of service not power, in fellowship not isolation, in enablement not in domination, in humility not in arrogance, in prayer not in egotism, in equality not in superiority, in stature not in status, in forgiveness not in self righteousness, in generosity not in hardness of heart"

(PAU/DOC.002, para. 3, 1990).

"I should like to make my position perfectly clear. I want nothing to do with and have little time for the macho power driven model [of headteacher]; I see it in the bullying, the domination and putting down of people"
(PAU/DOC.002, para. 10, 1990).

Leadership Strategies and Tactics

Strategies for St. Peters

This is a personal account of the decisions I made that were intended to develop and improve the education provided at St. Peter's. I have tried to be as accurate and objective as possible in outlining both what I tried to do and, more importantly, the reasons behind my major policy decisions affecting the religious nature and academic performance of the school. Rather than work chronologically, I have grouped decisions together that had a common purpose which, while making it easier to understand, suggests a greater clarity of vision than was really the case. I think all the major decisions at the time had an internal consistency, but I cannot claim that they were all fully thought out beforehand, or that they could all withstand close analytic scrutiny. Some were developed systematically, but with others their coherence is probably more apparent in retrospect than they were at the time.

I first focused on academic and curriculum matters. Though initially separated from questions of Catholicity, they were soon intertwined. At the time of my appointment, prior to the implementation of the 1988 Education Reform Act, schools controlled the nature and content of their curriculum. One of my tasks, therefore, was to determine a suitable curriculum and staffing structure for the governors to approve which would meet the needs already identified by them and the local authority. Assuming that my appointment gave me a mandate to implement the ideas I had presented during the interviews, I set about reorganising the school so that it would have a curriculum and staffing structure

based upon five groupings of traditional academic subjects or departments that I termed 'faculties'.

My primary academic aim was to make the curriculum provision more equitable for pupils whatever their academic ability and to maximise their examination achievements. While I hoped teaching staff would understand and appreciate the underlying philosophical and theological basis of what I intended to do before I made any changes, I was more concerned with making sure that the changes took place and felt that an isolated attempt to explain and convince without any corresponding actions would lead to the whole process floundering. Consequently, I used a two-pronged approach to the problem. I began putting in place the physical pattern of provision in the form I believed it should be in a Catholic school and, at the same time, used all the means of persuasion and influence that were available to me to explain why the changes were being made. I used both direct and indirect methods to influence opinion in support of my plans. Examples of the mechanisms through which I attempted to change perceptions, other than routine staff meetings, include the phrasing of job descriptions, rewriting school documentation, introducing staff briefings and a weekly newsletter for staff, parents and pupils as well as the more orthodox approach through the school INSET programme. The curriculum and staffing structure became operative at the start of my second year at the school and was fully implemented at the start of the third though, no doubt, staff had differing levels of understanding of their justification.

The reasons for my choice of a faculty system were founded in my understanding of the nature of Catholic education expressed by Garrone (1977), Baum (1982;1988) and relevant conciliar and post conciliar documents of the second Vatican Council of 1962-65 (Flannery, 1981; 1982). They emphasise that Catholic education is concerned primarily for a search for truth. Thus, the prime justification for my curriculum decisions was an

acceptance of a 'cognitive concern' approach rather than a 'utilitarian' view of education. My approach was also influenced by an acquaintance with the curriculum views of the educational philosophies of Hirst (1975), Hirst & Peters (1970) and Phenix (1964) and by my acceptance of Maslow's theory of human motivation (Maslow, 1970). However, even in hindsight I cannot pretend that my understanding was as thorough or authoritative as I might have implied in discussions at the time. I added to these a management strategy of maximum delegation of authority and responsibility that had helped achieve improvements in examination success in my previous school. It was a policy similar to the Catholic principle of subsidiarity first expounded by Pope Pius XI in the encyclical Quadragesimo Anno (1931) and suggested as appropriate for school management in The Catholic School (Garrone, 1977, para. 70) and The Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School (Baum, 1988, para 100). My espousal of it was, in the first instance, probably one of expediency and organisational efficiency rather than the result of any conscious decision to implement Catholic principles. The discovery that my approach had Catholic ideological justification certainly came after I had used it successfully in my previous school.

Based on my, admittedly, very sketchy and partial understanding of Hirst's 'Forms of Knowledge' and Phenix's 'Realms of Meaning', I argued that it is necessary for pupils to be initiated into all areas of human activity, both intellectual and practical, if they are to become fully functioning adults. Based on that argument, I decided that it was essential to create a common curriculum for all pupils. On moral grounds also I felt it unacceptable to deny any pupil access to a full curriculum, though I acknowledged it might be appropriate to use different teaching methods and content with pupils of differing levels of academic ability. I believed that the use of a differentiated curriculum, having alternative sets of choices, or even none at all, made available to pupils on the basis of their intellectual ability was a denial of their intrinsic value as human beings. In support of my view I cited the message of Christ's parable of the talents (Matt. 25, 14-30). It suggests, I argued,

equality of access despite inequalities in ability and, by implication, a common curriculum helping all pupils achieve the highest possible academic success of which they are capable.

As the headteacher, I was initial, but not the sole, moving force in formulating and articulating the school aims. They were formally published in school literature underneath the statement "The overriding purpose of the school is to provide Catholic Education" (PET/DOC.001, p. 6, 1991), and were enumerated in four sections: general, academic, social and vocational, and pastoral. The general aims gave priority to the development of the individual based on gospel values and to provide support for Catholic parents in their educative role. The academic aims were defined as follows:

1. *To initiate all pupils into those areas of experience that define mankind's knowledge and understanding.*
 2. *To help all pupils achieve the highest academic standards in accordance with their potential.*
 3. *To help all pupils acquire the knowledge and skills required in a fast-changing technologically oriented society.*
 4. *To help all pupils to use language effectively and imaginatively.*
 5. *To help all pupils appreciate human aspirations and achievements in all areas of human endeavour.*
 6. *To provide all pupils with the opportunity to exercise their creative abilities.*
- (PET/DOC.001, p. 6, 1991).

The curriculum pattern I chose to achieve these aims was limited and conservative. I was concerned to provide, as far as possible, a common curriculum for all pupils which, consequently, limited the range of options made available. What was established was very similar to that later adopted in the first formulation of the National Curriculum. Subjects were grouped into five faculties. Each had one fifth of the academic time available during the week and was timetabled with the whole of one year group at a time. Faculty heads decided pupil organisation, staff deployment and the subject material and teaching methods for their curriculum block.

When financial delegation through Local Management of Schools (LMS) was implemented they had full financial responsibility for the purchase of equipment, materials and furniture, as well as for the decoration and maintenance of their allocated rooms. They were also able to vire money as they wished. The intention was to give maximum management autonomy and a corresponding responsibility for academic outcomes. While it provided a great deal of flexibility within a faculty, co-operation between faculties tended to be inhibited, although there was nothing structurally to prevent it.

The description of the curriculum organisation in faculties given below is taken from St. Peter's school prospectus prepared for the 1990 intake. In later editions the nomenclature used for the different age groups was changed in line with national usage though the structure remained the same.

In Yrs 2 and 3 all pupils study the same subjects but may do slightly different work depending on the group in which they are placed. In Yr 4 pupils have a choice of subjects within the Faculties but not between subjects offered in different Faculties. In addition to compulsory Religious Education, English Language, Mathematics, Science and Physical Education, there is a range of courses which may change when the National Curriculum is finalised.

We have 40 @ 35 minute periods per week for the academic curriculum, with an additional 5 @ 35 minute periods per week for the pastoral curriculum (which includes religious assemblies and registration).

The balance of time for the Yrs 2 & 3 in 1990/91 is as follows:

R.E./MATH	8	EXPR 'VE ARTS	8	SCIENCES	8	HUMANITIES	8	TECH & CR 'VE	8	PASTORAL	5
ALL PUPILS		ALL PUPILS		ALL PUPILS		ALL PUPILS		ALL PUPILS		ALL PUPILS	
R.E.	4	ENG. LANG		SUFFOLK		HISTORY	2	TECHNOLOGY	4		
MATHS	4	ENG. LIT		SCIENCE		GEOGRAPHY	2	ART	2		
		DRAMA		IN YR 3		LANGUAGES	4	MUSIC	2		
		DANCE									
		MOVEMENT									
		P.E.									

The curriculum for Yrs 4 and 5 and the balance of time given to each area for 1990/91 are similar to Yrs 2 and 3 but include some choice within Faculty areas.

R.E./MATHS	8	EXPR 'VE ARTS	8	SCIENCES	8	HUMANITIES	8	TECH CR 'VE	8	PASTORAL	5
ALL PUPILS		ENG LANG ALL		ALL PUPILS		ALL PUPILS		ALL PUPILS		ALL PUPILS	5
		ENG LIT MOST	4			ANY TWO OF		ANY TWO OF			
R.E.	4			SUFFOLK		HISTORY	4	ART	4		
MATHS	4			SCIENCE		GEOGRAPHY	4	CDT	4		
		P.E. ALL	4	DOUBLE		FRENCH	4	MUSIC	4		
				CERTIFICATE	8	SPANISH	4	H.E.	4		
						I.T.	4				

(PET/DOC.002, pp. 6-7, 1990).

Within this curriculum structure, heads of faculty were given responsibility to organise pupils and classes in which ever way they felt appropriate provided that they did not contradict whole-school policies. Those overarching policies required each faculty:

To teach all pupils, including those with special educational needs, and provide suitable courses for them - no-one is to be rejected as unsuitable for any subject(s)
(PET/DOC.011, para. 7, 1991).

To maximise the examination achievement of all pupils and minimise failure
(PET/DOC.011, paras. 7, 28, 1991).

Meeting the special educational needs of pupils was to be done, as far as possible, through in-class support not their withdrawal from normal classes (PET/DOC.002, p. 6, 1990).

Where subject choice was available at age 14+ parents and pupils would determine the choice of subjects but staff would determine level of examination course or papers.

Through this structure I hoped to create teams of staff with a great amount of freedom to choose their own methods of working while clearly stating and determining the overall school objectives they were expected to achieve. In doing so I wanted to ensure that the responsibility for their effectiveness remained with them and was not dependent on too many factors outside their control. I wanted to minimise the school arrangements that were determined outside the faculties, for example by a timetabler, that might be for the benefit of any particular subject such as mathematics or English. I also wanted to reduce the potential for staff, legitimately or otherwise, to place on others the responsibility for

low levels of pupils academic achievement. For example, I wanted to ensure that excuses such as, 'we were opted against physics and they took the most able pupils', could no longer be a valid reason for poor overall examination results within one faculty grouping when compared to others.

The structure ensured each faculty team of staff taught all the pupils in the year group and had maximum control over teaching methods, organisation and discipline. The objective was to establish a mechanism whereby teacher aspirations and expectations were raised, and to provide the means through which heads of faculty and their staff could have maximum control over their teaching. It was put in place to encourage them to bring their success rates up to the standard of the most effective faculties by making them responsible and accountable for the success, or failure, of all the pupils (PET/DOC.011, 1991).

Having been given equal levels of input and opportunity, each faculty was expected to achieve similar levels of examination success overall. I was aware that the assumption that all examinations were equally difficult was not strictly accurate in the light of subject comparability research, but it provided a useful framework for setting targets and evaluating progress in improving the levels of pupil's academic achievement in public examinations. It also helped establish the principle that faculties were equally responsible for both successes and failures.

When I was appointed in 1985 the school's main legal parameters were defined by the 1944 Education Act enshrining the dual system of education. Under it, voluntary schools had their own forms of governance and were not controlled by the LEA in the same way as county schools. Sometimes there was a tendency for headteachers, local authority officers, teaching staff and parents to forget, or even wilfully ignore, the dual system and act as if all schools located within one authority were interchangeable. I thought that if the school was to be other than 'a county school with crucifixes', it was important to highlight

its distinctive Catholic nature and ensure that the school was seen to provide an alternative to the secular education that was being offered elsewhere. An easy way to start the process was to deal with the external image and focus attention on Catholicity by defining and showing the school as different. I regarded this approach as a means to an end rather than a specific primary goal.

In emphasising a clear Catholic image I hoped to develop and promote a climate within which an accepted Catholic way of doing things was recognised as a feasible and desirable corporate goal. I wanted the school to have a way of working that clearly did not simply echo the attitudes and values of secular society. During the following years there were a many decisions implemented which were designed to enhance the concept of a school with a specifically religious identity and purpose. Initially, they tended to be highly visible. The most prominent involved replacing the standard authority school nameplate at the entrance to the school grounds (which gave the school name but omitted its Roman Catholic status) with a fifteen feet high bronze sculpture of the Risen Christ placed high on the end wall of the school facing the only entrance to the site with the school name and status in twelve inch high letters mounted to one side. The sculpture was designed and made by pupils. Pupils also designed and made a wide range of artefacts for the use in school chapel and on other liturgical occasions. Other changes included re-designing the school's headed note paper, reversing the prominence formerly given to the authority compared to that of the school and diocese, and re-writing the school prospectus emphasising its distinctive Catholic character. Even symbols which formed part of the physical structure were changed wherever possible. For example, St. Peter's is housed in buildings formerly owned by the local authority. The previous school's coat of arms had been left in place above the main entrance to the buildings after the transfer of ownership to the diocese. Shortly before my retirement as headteacher it was replaced with the emblem of the school's religious patron.

There were other innovations designed to create or emphasise the school's Catholic identity to staff, pupils and visitors. A bible was placed prominently in the entrance foyer open at an appropriate page for the day. The chapel was refurbished, carpeted and given better quality chairs than those normally used in schools. Religious paintings and icons were given prominent positions. Literature sent to job applicants was re-written to highlight the religious nature of the school and what would be expected of candidates if they were appointed. The staff handbook contained documents explaining Catholic attitudes and their impact on daily life (PET/DOC.001, pp. 5, 7, 8, 1991). Policy documents were rooted in religious principles and, where possible and appropriate, couched in religious terms (e.g. School Discipline and School Rules, PET/DOC.002, pp. 9, 9a, 1990; Classroom Expectations, PET/DOC.001, p. 9, 1991; Equal Opportunities, PET/DOC.001, p. 33, 1991). All these changes were intended to focus the attention of all connected with the school on the fact that it was a particular type of community. However, I was aware that changing the external image was easy in comparison to developing a distinctively Catholic curriculum and institutional processes.

My intention was not just to show that Catholic schools had different icons from those displayed in county schools, but for those icons to be representative of a different type of community, having its particular values attitudes and practices based in its Catholic beliefs. Above all, I tried to ensure that my own conduct and approach to my role as headteacher was seen to be centred in my own religious faith. In addition, I highlighted the religious activities of the school. I arranged that one of the local parish masses should take place in the school which was made open to all who wished to attend, including pupils. Staff meetings always included a time for prayer and reflection. Pupil assemblies became religious occasions and were not used for general school business. Additional staff were appointed to the religious education department. The time allocated to the subject was increased and a greater emphasis placed on the quality of academic rigour expected in its

lessons by making the subject examinable. As long as it was not examined I believed that pupils would regard it as being of less value than other subjects and, perhaps, feeling that their teachers had similar views, would not give it the attention that it deserved.

Consequently, in addition to improving the quality of teaching, I made great efforts to raise the levels of examination achievement in religious education to that of the most successful departments. I was determined that all pupils would, at least, learn about the Catholic faith. I hoped, of course, that the process would also provide a means of both evangelisation and catechesis as well as simple knowledge. Together, all these changes were designed to make the understanding and experience of a religiously oriented community a dominant and explicit feature of life at St. Peter's.

Although it may be convenient to speak of the religious curriculum and the secular curriculum in the Catholic school, as though these were separate and distinct, the Church claims every part of the curriculum to be religious, since there is nothing which does not ultimately relate to God. I wanted people to understand that what we taught as well as the way in which we behaved was based on distinctive Catholic principles. I wanted to emphasise the 'stick of rock' model of a Catholic school. Wherever one looked, I hoped, '*Catholic education*' would be seen.

The culture of interpersonal-relationships is also a matter pertaining to a Catholic ethos. I came to realise that, in addition to conducting myself in an appropriate manner, I would need to develop some formal structures through which a corporate Catholic culture could be implemented. However, to complement the pastoral structures, I had to explain and convince staff of the manner in which I wanted them to carry out their daily tasks.

Organisational developments included changes in the nature, duration and content of the tutorial or form periods scheduled at the start of the morning and afternoon sessions. For

example, form teachers were expected to stay with their assigned groups throughout for the duration of their schooling in order to emphasise their role 'in loco parentis'. Their relationship with the pupils was made less transitory than is often the case in schools where a tutor will take on a new group at the start of each academic year. Consequently, both parties were expected to work to ensure the relationship was constructive since they did not have the option of separation after twelve months together.

I asked and expected all pupils to act as prefects in their final year. This was a change from the former practice of using a select few. In addition, the role was redefined to become a responsibility rather than a reward. Prefects were expected to look after, help guide and care for younger pupils rather than simply control them, and time was set aside to teach them how to carry out that role. I argued that pupils could only learn to take responsibility if they were given it in the first place, and I wanted to emphasise to them that their task was to use their seniority, abilities, knowledge and experience for the direct benefit others, not for themselves.

The existing disciplinary system was changed to more closely involve parents so that there was less opportunity for any gulf to develop between the expectations of school and home. I tried to move the emphasis more towards praising that which was good rather than censuring that which was unacceptable. To achieve this aim a formal system of recording, and informing parents of the activities of their children was devised by one of the deputy headteachers. It was centred around a log book which the pupils carried at all times. Staff were encouraged to record any praise-worthy efforts of the pupils in it and parents were asked to read the contents and signed the book at the end of each week. To further highlight the positive achievements of pupils I ensured the weekly newsletter emphasised all the good things that were taking place in the school and used it as a vehicle to portray the attitudes and values that I wanted to develop at St. Peter's.

In hindsight, while many staff seemed to absorb the Catholic ethos I was trying to create and behave in ways consistent with it, I cannot be sure that I achieved my main goal. I wanted to make the implicit Catholicity of St. Peter's so obviously explicit that staff, governors, pupils and parents would automatically articulate or justify its Catholic underpinnings when talking about the school's activities to others. I cannot be certain that they all did so. Nor can I claim that everyone accepted either what I wanted to do or the ways in which I approached my task.

The particular problems involved in reporting one's own intentions and actions, and the effects they have, make any analysis of their success difficult. When I left St. Peter's it was with a sense of profound failure. A more objective view of the extent of my success or failure in developing an effective Catholic school can be best judged by others rather than myself, and for that I have relied mainly on comments arising from formal interviews. However, the comments of others, if given to me directly, cannot be considered in exactly the same way as responses to an unknown independent researcher. Nevertheless, I have tried not to present a distorted picture in my selection of observations of my leadership.

Strategies for St Paul's

A number of connected strategies have been used to achieve the ecumenical nursery model of Catholic school the headteacher seeks. The most important in his view, and the one in which he has invested much time, is the development of a statement of the philosophy and ethos of the school agreed by staff and governors. It has formed the corner stone of all his endeavours. The thinking behind it developed gradually during his first two years in post and owed much to his discussions with the school's Church of England chaplain before it was published. He reports that they had very similar ideas about education and the chaplain was one of the few people with whom he felt he could talk honestly and openly about the school (PAU/INT.001, 1994, para. 80-82).

The process of articulation and agreement took over a year to achieve and is now a prominent feature of the school prospectus, staff handbook and any discussion of school development. However, an LEA report on the management structure of the school prepared in the Spring term of 1995 claims that:

"all [interviewees] indicated that this ['ethos statement'] is a shared set of values and beliefs which shapes their practice ... but interpretation is individual ... practice is not consistent and there are difficult divergence's ..."

(PAU/LEA.002, 1995, para. 6).

The pattern of individualistic, and often contrary, interpretations is noted in a number of interviews and discussions with staff:

"... I know my ethos is the same as ninety per cent of the other staff"

(Teacher), (PAU/LEA.001, p. 7a, 1995).

"There are versions of the ethos. The [philosophy and ethos] statement says it clearly but its not carried out in many ways. It's not influencing pupil's behaviour"

(Teacher), (PAU/LEA.001, p. 10, 1995).

"The ethos is floundering. People do not know what it is"

(Teacher), (PAU/LEA.001, p. 8a, 1995).

"The ethos is so strong ..."

(Teacher), (PAU/LEA.001, p. 25a, 1995).

"The [schools] Catholicity and the ethos are not the same"

(Teacher), (PAU/LEA.001, p. 24a, 1995).

"The decision to have parallel schools [has produced] two schools and tribalism; not one ethos but two"

(LEA officer), (PAU/LEA.001, p. 5a, 1995).

"The principal and Head of Hall have different views on how the schools strong code of non-violence should be viewed ..."

(LEA officer), (PAU/FLD.021, 1995).

Nevertheless, the belief that there is an agreed shared St. Paul's ethos is strongly held by many who see it as an important talisman to be defended against any change or adaptation:

"This is a ... distinctive and unique school ... whatever changes come we will preserve, maintain and develop this distinctiveness"

(Headteacher), (PAU/ARC.004, para. 1, 1993).

"There is still lingering suspicion that the Diocesan Schools Commission is trying to make the school something that it does not want to be"

(Headteacher), (PAU/FLD.003, p. 3, 1993).

"... this school is very special ... if we go for that change [in the age of transfer] we must see that this school continues the way it is ..."

(Parent), (PAU/ARC.003, para. 10, 1993).

After what was seen as "an attempt by the diocese to alter the ethos of the school ... parents ... presented a petition to the Archbishop"

(Arthur, 1994).

"The staff are proud and protective [because of] a sense that the school [ethos] is under attack [from the] foundation governors insistence on the type of Catholicity [they want]"

(Teacher), (PAU/INT.003, 1994).

Central to the headteacher's understanding of Catholic educational philosophy is the concept of personal worth. In respect of pupils it finds practical expression in his attitude towards admissions. The effects of his predecessor's policy of academic selection of applicants (PAU/LEA.001, p. 9a, 1995; PAU/INT.008) had played a large part in producing a school roll where just under fifty per cent of the pupils were Catholics and significant numbers of Catholic parents living in the school's natural catchment area, approximately forty per cent, chose to send their children elsewhere. In comparison, the national picture shows that an average of eighty-eight per cent of the school population in Catholic schools are baptised Catholics (Catholic Education Service, 1992). LEA officers suggested that the policy had also produced a skewed social intake biased towards the more affluent and intelligent (PAU/FLD.011, p. 3, 1994).

Since his appointment, the new headteacher has made great efforts to encourage all Catholic parents to send their children to the school. Nevertheless, he has also continued to encourage applications from non-Catholic parents in order that St. Paul's should have a role meeting the needs of the Church and the wider society in general (PAU/INT/001, para. 11-12; 70; 100-106) rather than be a school for the Catholic community only (PAU/FLD.003, p. 2, 1993). However, in his efforts to achieve his goal he has abandoned the unauthorised, informal and unspoken policy of pupil selection based on ability practised by his predecessor (PAU/FLD.011, 1994; PAU/INT.008, 1995) and is working to "welcome primarily ... any Catholic families, particularly from the lower end of town

[i.e. working class] who didn't feel that this [St. Paul's] was their place" (PAU/INT/001, para. 41 - 42). This change has had the effect over a period of time, it has been argued, of making the school more "genuinely Catholic in its attitude to its intake and properly comprehensive" ... but with a possible consequential "drop in academic standards" (PAU/INT/008, 1995).

The emphasis on personal worth in respect of staff is manifest in the involvement of staff in a consensual approach to decision making. The headteacher has created management groups of senior staff to discuss and establish policy, including a senior management team known as the Steering Support Group. Working parties are a particular feature, involving staff at all levels within the institution, having authority to solve particular problems as they arise in the school. The headteacher's general approach is always open and encouraging, providing opportunities for decision making by others and valuing their opinions. The following comments from teaching staff are typical of many that indicate the strong approval and personal support his management generated:

"Under [the previous headteacher] there were no decision making opportunities. Under [the new headteacher] every opportunity ..."
(PAU/LEA.001, p. 7, 1995).

"He involves others in decision making. He will accept the decisions of a task group [that he has set up] even if he disagreed with it, provided it had valid reasoning"
(PAU/INT.002, 1994).

"He was very collegiate. ... open to suggestions. ... He had no ego"
(PAU/INT.003, 1994).

"He developed consensus through task groups [and] wanted input from everyone"
(PAU/INT.004, 1994).

"[His management style] allows, encourages people to become involved in decision making"
(PAU/INT.005, 1994).

"Everyone felt that the headteacher was more than willing to listen to them and their views sympathetically, and to treat their views with respect ... Without exception all felt valued as a person by the headteacher ..."
(PAU/DOC.011, 1994).

But, despite the agreement about the headteacher, it is clear that there are significant differences of opinion among staff as to the nature and direction that the school should take at a time of transition, especially as, according to one long serving teacher, " we had not been used to such things as consultation, accountability, teams and working together [under the previous regime. It] created a power vacuum into which many powerful people ran when he [the former headteacher] left" (PAU/INT.003, 1994). Similar serious divisions exist within the governing body concerning the future direction of the school (PAU/FLD.009; 010, 1994), its financial stability (PAU/DOC.011, p. 22) and such matters, for example, as an appropriate approach to sex education (PAU/ARC.010; 011; 012, 1994). There is also evidence of deep suspicion of the foundation governors by some staff with the headteacher being urged to become more dominant, 'take over' the governing body and so determine the school's direction (PAU/INT.003, 1994).

Operating his policy of trust and openness within such a divided and distrustful environment has led, almost inevitably, to a polarisation of views about the headteacher's leadership qualities. Some regard him as weak and ineffective, lacking drive and the ability to give direction to the school. Others feel empowered by him and believe he is showing clear leadership in a very difficult situation.

The effect of his approach to management amid the tensions and contradictions of St. Paul's has led to an apparent passivity, or perhaps neutrality, on the headteacher's part. Looking back, he feels that "maybe I wasn't assertive enough" (PAU/INT.001, 1994, para. 663). Certainly, there is evidence that his willingness to allow others to make decisions produced some apparently contradictory policies. This can be seen most clearly in the value placed upon religious education. Everyone is agreed that the headteacher is a committed and spiritual man who both values his Catholic faith and is prepared to acknowledge it openly. Religious education is important to him, both personally and

professionally, and he has worked hard to develop religious activities within the school. Shortly after his recent move to a new post he told me:

"The area of theology and religious education within the school always was a source of anxiety for me because I felt it was not a very good department and as a former Head of R.E. that was very hard to bear"
(PAU/INT.001. 1994, para. 642-648).

Despite this concern, he did not appear to use the schools resources to improve matters. On the contrary he seems to have accepted, without opposition, decisions of the Steering Support Group to allocate very low levels of funding to the department. For example, in planning for the 1994-95 academic year the budget for religious education was slightly smaller than that given to the minority subject theatre studies. In comparison, in the same year, the mathematics and English departments, received four times and science nine times its level of finance (PAU/LEA.001, p. 34, 1995). Diocesan guidelines expect the budgets of such departments to be broadly equal (Archdiocese of Birmingham, Department of Religious Education, 1991, p. B2, 2). Similarly, he has apparently acquiesced to the use of the school's chapels as storerooms and seemed unable, or unwilling, to restore them to their proper function when requested to do so by the governors buildings committee (PAU/MIN.001, 1994). Yet at the same time that he was allowing such under-funding and the misuse of the chapels, he was instrumental in introducing religious icons and pictures into the school for the first time in over twenty years. I was told: "We used to be very ashamed of our Catholicity, very reticent ... [the new headteacher has] put it to the forefront. The [religious welcome] sign and [religious] art work are because of him" (PAU/INT.003, 1994). The contradictions appear to lie in his determination to avoid confrontation and achieve consensus before making changes.

In addition to the published ethos and philosophy statement which he coupled to a strategy of influencing by personal example, the headteacher explained his views about the

direction that he wanted the school to take by means of discussion papers which were circulated to staff. They include his views on the nature of Catholic schools (PAU/DOC.008, 1994); the challenges facing Catholic education (PAU/DOC.001, 1990); leadership and authority in Catholic schools (PAU/DOC.002, 1990); the Catholic school as a community (PAU/DOC.003, 1990) and the importance of prayer in the life of the school (PAU/DOC.004, 1990). These 'position papers' have been matched by his actions, such as his work with Wellchester's ecumenical groups and his involvement of the school pupils in the liturgies of the local Catholic parishes (PAU/INT.001, paras. 143-150; 444-445).

Summary

Headship is a difficult and often lonely task. Clearly, the leadership role required of the headteacher of St. Paul's was difficult; much, much more so than the task I inherited at St. Peter's. Whereas I represented, and was able to provide, continuity of leadership in a relatively stable environment and encountered very little open opposition or dissent to the changes that I introduced, the new headteacher at St. Paul's found himself in a turbulent atmosphere acting less like a leading professional educator and more like "a form of poultice on a running sore, drawing out much of the poison, at great personal cost [but making] the school a much healthier place" (PAU/FLD.014, p. 1, 1994).

School and Community - Comparisons and Contrasts

Introduction

During the late 1980s and early 1990s the external circumstances facing the two schools were very similar. As headteachers we were in agreement in our analysis of the problems facing Catholic education in an increasingly secular and fragmented society of Britain. We also faced similar dilemmas responding to the demands of the 1988 Education Act and the subsequent legislation. However, St. Peter's and St. Paul's were not at identical stages of

their institutional life and were located in, and served, different types of community. In addition, since they had developed different characteristics, they did not face the same problems.

My task as headteacher was to foster St. Peter's growth and work towards the fulfilment of its already largely agreed purposes. It seemed to be requiring fine tuning rather than drastic change. St. Paul's, on the other hand, was a school which felt somewhat uncertain of itself following the retirement of its extremely charismatic and powerful headteacher particularly at a time of great upheaval in the world of education (PAU/ARC.002, 1988; PAU/FLD.003, 1993; Arthur, 1994). St. Paul's was a very particular, almost unique, highly independent institution faced with the massive conforming and centralising tendencies of government legislation from 1988 onwards, which brought in its wake constraints and a style of accountability that were entirely foreign to its existing character. Its new headteacher could be said to be facing a time of crisis in the school's life. Though the major external pressures were similar for both schools, their internal circumstances were very dissimilar. Indeed, their development required different approaches which resulted, perhaps inevitably, in markedly different outcomes.

Social Environment and the School Community

The two schools are located in different social environments. Table X shows the pupil composition of St Paul's and St. Peter's as being almost mirror images. The pattern at St. Peter's reflects that of the area, St. Paul's is, in comparison, more restricted. While it is the case that Wellchester is located in a more affluent area of than Riverside, the middle class bias of St. Paul's intake is more pronounced than one would expect. The reasons have not been extensively researched, but the headteacher and others hold a view that many Catholic parents do not feel comfortable with St. Paul's on social and religious grounds, and so choose to send their children elsewhere, most often to non-Catholic schools since

Table X

PUPIL DISTRIBUTION BY SOCIAL STATUS
ST. PETER'S v ST. PAUL'S

	PERCENTAGE OF PUPILS			
ST. PETER'S [n = 133]	21.05	54.14	19.55	5.26
ST. PAUL'S [n = 145]	2.76	22.76	43.45	31.03
	1	2	3	4
	SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS			

there is no close Catholic alternative (PAU/INT.001, para. 42-3, 1994; PAU/DOC.009, p. 10, 1994; PAU/FLD.005, 1994). On the other hand, a small scale LEA sponsored research project indicates that St. Peter's has the largest socio-economic spread of all secondary schools within their area of the county giving a particularly broad and balanced intake (Prior, 1995, pp. 32, A16, A17). An indication of the comparative socio-economic standing of the schools' respective intakes can be seen from the level of parental contributions to school funds. St. Paul's governors felt able to request a voluntary contribution from parents of forty pounds per year from parents during the years 1986-1995, rising to sixty-five pounds for the 1996-97 academic year. During that same period the maximum St. Peter's governors felt parents could realistically afford was nine pounds.

Meeting Needs - Parental Expectation and Pupil Intake

The extent to which a school is perceived to meet the needs of the community for which it is provided can be measured, in part, by the percentage of such pupils living in its catchment area who choose to attend it. When this criterion is applied to the Catholic communities served by St. Paul's and St. Peter's different levels of group satisfaction emerge. A survey of average pupil transfers over five years from 1990-94, two years either side of the period of the quantitative study, shows nearly sixty-two per cent of the Catholics in St. Paul's Catholic 'feeder' schools transferring to them (PAU/ARC.016,

1995). In contrast, just over ninety-eight per cent of the available Catholic pupils transferred to St. Peter's (PET/ARC.004, 1995). Both schools were oversubscribed each year during this period but, clearly, while St. Peter's appears to find favour with, and meet the aspirations of, nearly all its immediate Catholic community, the same cannot be said of St. Paul's.

During this same period both schools attracted a number of non-Catholic pupils. However, the attitudes of the two schools towards them differed. St. Peter's had approximately twenty-five per cent non-Catholic pupils. It takes the view, clearly expressed in its admission criteria and prospectus, that its primary task is to serve the needs of the Catholic faith community (PET/DOC.002. pp. 1, 2, 2a, 3, 4, 4a, 1992). Non-Catholics are expected to accept an educational approach which is geared to that purpose. The overall effect of the chosen strategy is to give St. Peter's a relatively narrow but directed religious focus. It is unambiguous and one to which it expects all pupils and parents to conform. It can be characterised as a strategy of maintenance of the Catholic community, coupled with tolerance of those of other faiths and an inevitable tendency towards assimilation:

"They [non-Catholics] will be expected to fall in line [and] take part in everything. They will be welcomed but not forced"

(Chairman of Governors), (PET/INT.002, 1994).

There is only one school that works within a religious framework in Riverside ... Non-Catholics [are] not browbeaten but made to understand and appreciate the values of a Catholic school"

(Parent), (PET/INT.003, 1994).

"If you were ambivalent about [Catholic] faith you could come into conflict [with the school]. [You] were expected to co-operate, at least [have] no disrespect ... [You] need to know what it means to go into such a strong faith community [where the] religious dimension permeates ... you need to ensure that you understand [a] faith community ... You might find your child could develop an adherence to Catholicism [arising] accidentally or incidentally, not [from] proselytising" (A series of separate but connected statements from a former teacher),

(PET/INT.005, 1994).

"[It is] a real Catholic school, emphasising learning Catholicism [and] practising it"

(Teacher), (PET/INT.007, 1995).

"... [All pupils are] expected to take a full part in masses and all the religious activities ... [there will be] opportunity to enter the Catholic faith and receive the sacraments ... I know pupils who have become Catholics ..."

(Teacher), (PET/INT.008, 1995).

While it is not the intention to proselytise at St. Peter's, and there is no deliberate or systematic attempt to do so, there were a number of pupil converts to Catholicism while I was headteacher which, some of them suggested, was encouraged by the schools inclusive policy in respect of religious activities (PET/INT/015, 1994; PET/INT/017, 1994). No-one to whom I spoke in connection with St. Paul's pointed to any similar embracing of Catholicism by non-Catholic pupils.

St. Paul's adopts a much more pluralist approach towards its intake and in particular its non-Catholic pupils than St. Peter's. It attempts, while respecting their religious freedom, to meet the religious and spiritual needs of pupils of a variety of faiths and of none. Its approach is made clear in the prospectus and staff handbook by a statement of the school's philosophy and ethos encouraging choice, diversity and freedom of worship. The admissions policy in respect of non-Catholics makes repeated references to parents demonstrating their support of the aims of the school as a necessary requirement (PAU/DOC.005, p.15, 1992). However, there are no explicit religious aims included in any documentation to which applicants can refer or which governors can rely when making judgements between applicants. It appears that, for some, the 'ethos statement' is often regarded as being synonymous with school aims, though in the published criteria of admission a distinction is implied in the categories cited below that ethos is concerned with personal attitudes and relationships rather than any specific educational outcome.

- "
(e) *Brothers and sisters or children of former pupils whose parents can demonstrate that they wish them to be educated at St. Paul's and will support its aims.*

- (f) *Children of supportive religious backgrounds whose parents can give sound reasons that they desire them to be educated at Trinity and will support its aims. ...*
- (g) *Children with pastoral or curricular needs who will benefit from and respond to the school's ethos. ... " (PAU/DOC.005, p. 15, 1992).*

The percentage of non-Catholics attending St. Paul's is significantly higher than at St. Peter's. Only sixty-two per cent of its potential Catholic intake chose to attend St. Paul's. This low Catholic intake coupled with the a school capacity of about thirteen hundred pupils, produces a total pupil population of approximately fifty to fifty-five per cent non-Catholic (PAU/ARC.015, 1995). There are insufficient Catholics in St. Paul's catchment area to fill the school but, even if there were, the headteacher, some staff and some governors do not want it to cater solely for Catholic pupils (PAU/FLD.003; 004; 007).

Consequently, and in contrast to St. Peter's, St. Paul's adopts a missionary strategy which is more open and welcoming to those outside the Catholic faith than at St. Peter's. At the same time, however, it is both more ambiguous in its purpose and risks losing focus to become all things to all pupils. Certainly, the nature of its Catholic purpose and the degree to which it was pursued is a matter of serious concern both to the Ordinary of the diocese and some governors. This concern generates disputes with other governors and some parents. For some St. Paul's is not Catholic enough. For others it is too Catholic:

"St. Paul's is either liked or hated by Catholic parents. It inspires strong and polarised views" (Independent educational consultant), (PAU/FLD.005, 1994).
"St. Paul's liberal approach to the children's own particular inner life was what the parents wanted" (Headteacher), (PAU/INT.001, 1994).
"Where is the evangelisation? Catholics in my parish do not send their children to St. Paul's because it is not a Catholic school" (Foundation Governor), (PAU/FLD.007, 1994).
"... there is little overt encouragement for pupils to continue their pilgrimage of faith in the classroom ... " (School Audit by Diocesan Religious Department), (PAU/ARC.014, p. 4, 1995).

"For some Catholics the criticism [that St. Paul's does not provide a Catholic education] is valid. Mass is not compulsory and training in religious activities [is] lacking. Others are very happy with the school approach"
(Teacher), (PAU/INT.002, 1994).

St Peter's adopts a catechising role as the basis of its educational model even though some twenty to twenty-five per cent of its pupils are not Catholics and it is recognised that a proportion of its Catholic pupils could be described as being, what can be described as, tribal rather than personally committed and practising. It regards its specific religious character as central to its purpose. Accordingly, its Catholicity forms and defines its compulsory core activities.

"There is never any compromise on the Catholic ethos; never any watering down for, say, non-Catholic parents ... it is clearly stated and acted out ... "
(Parent governor), (PET/INT.003, 1994).

The centrality of catechesis at St. Peter's purpose is reflected in the status given to the religious education department, in particular the time allocation given to the subject and the involvement of all pupils in religious activities such as daily prayer and regular school liturgy. Using such an approach with its particular intake means that it also develops an evangelising role as it teaches pupils about the Catholic faith in addition to providing an experience of a living, praying and worshipping Catholic community. Comments from pupils in interviews made for this study, as well as those reported elsewhere (Morris, 1995), suggest that it is successful:

" I really enjoyed the religious atmosphere ... like Katimavik [a school prayer group]" (Pupil), (PET/INT.012, 1995).
"Because of the value placed on religion the school ... gives children a chance to experience religious life" (Pupil), (PET/INT.013, 1995).
"R.E. lessons have taught me more about life and living than all other lessons together. They give the whole school more meaning ... Religion is in the centre and everything else revolves round it" (Pupil), (PET/INT.014, 1995).

"The spiritual formation of pupils is integral to the life of the school and extends beyond the school gates. ... During the inspection there was evidence of regular prayer in assemblies, R.E. lessons and a programme of residential retreats"
 (Section 13 School Inspection by Diocesan Religious Department),
 (PET/DOC.005, p.23, 1995).

"In form assemblies pupils displayed a familiarity with formal prayer"
 (Section 13 School Inspection by Diocesan Religious Department),
 (PET/DOC.005, p.24, 1995).

"It was evident that praying is not an activity restricted to pupils"
 (Section 13 School Inspection by Diocesan Religious Department),
 (PET/DOC.005, p.23, 1995).

In contrast, St. Paul's does not provide religious education lessons as a core activity for all pupils or give the department and its activities the status expected by the Diocesan Department of Religious Education (PAU/FLD.039; PAU/ARC.010). In addition, while recognising that "worship is an essential part of the life of the school community", the stated philosophy of St. Paul's makes it clear that the school will provide opportunities for pupils to participate rather than make it an integral corporate activity (PAU/DOC.007, 1994, p. 7). The juxtaposition in the ethos statement of the phrases "an essential element" with "the freedom to decline such an opportunity" both reflects and creates tensions within the school community, not least on the question of compliance with the law, which were clearly unresolved during the period of this study.

Such matters are an underlying source of concern to diocesan authorities and other Catholics who visit the school, as the following comments illustrate:

"During the inspection the requirement of the 1988 Act concerning daily collective worship were not fulfilled. To date the school has not established a pattern of daily prayer. Indeed, it is clear that there is no regular provision for prayer in the school" (Extract - audit by the Diocesan Religious Department),
 (PAU/ARC.014, p. 9, 1995).

"They do not say prayers at all" (Candidate for vacant headship),
 (PAU/FLD.024, 1995).

"There is a lack of regular prayers in class" (Governor),
 PAU/LEA.001, p.23, 1995).

The Professional Community

In common with the majority of Catholic secondary schools in England and Wales, both St. Paul's and St. Peter's had significant numbers of non-Catholic teaching staff. During the years 1986-92, the balance of non-Catholic to Catholic staff was similar in both schools. However, it remained in favour of Catholics at St. Peter's for all but one year during this period (PET/ARC.003), while at St. Paul's only in 1990 and 1991 were there more Catholic than non-Catholic staff (PAU/ARC.013).

Such a distribution does not necessarily create damaging tensions between staff, or between staff and governors, though comments by one member of St. Paul's staff that she "cannot follow a Catholic line" on such topics as abortion but "feels at liberty to put forward non-Catholic views" (PAU/LEA.001, p. 24a, 1995), and by another that she "would be very sorry to see [St. Paul's] a strictly run Catholic school (PAU/LEA.001, p. 26a, 1995), tend to validate the concerns expressed by some of the Foundation governors.

In both schools there is evidence of some individual resentment that Catholic orthodoxy is an issue in appointments and that non-Catholic staff are barred from holding senior posts. This is particularly noticeable at St. Paul's where there is ongoing unrest within the governing body because of two temporary heads of year appointments who are not Catholics (PAU/FLD.012, 1994; PAU/FLD. 016, 1994; PAU/LEA.001, p.p. 23, 1995). Staff are aware of some governors' concerns in this particular case and the restricted promotional prospects for non-Catholic staff within the school generally. They resent the position in which they are placed (PAU/LEA.001, p. 25a, 1995).

Non-Catholics serve as elected teacher governors at both schools. At St. Peter's their religious allegiances does not appear to cause them, or any other members of the governing body, to consider openly that they might have any conflict of interest vis-a-vis

the diocesan trust deed when carrying out their role in a Catholic school. Indeed, that there are non-Catholic staff at St. Peter's sometimes came as a surprise to outside observers of their work and attitudes (PET/INT.009, 1995). On the other hand, the parent governors at St. Paul's are frequently at odds with foundation governors on a number of issues relating to the character of the school and some of its practices (PAU/FLD.007, 1993; PAU/FLD.010, 1994; PAU/FLD.032, 1995). In addition, there are evident differences of approach and outlook displayed by some Catholic and non-Catholic staff at St. Paul's highlighted in a number of disagreements recorded in the minutes of governors meetings, governors correspondence and voiced by interviewees during a joint LEA/diocesan management review in 1995. Areas of open disagreement include:

- *the exclusion of pupils and, on occasions, their re-admittance by governors*
(PAU/FLD.001, 1992; PAU/FLD.021, 1995; PAU/PER.007, 1995;
PAU/MIN.004, May 1995; PAU/MIN.007, July 1995).
- *staff appointments* (PAU/ARC.011, 1994; PAU/FLD.017, p. 4, 1994;
PAU/LEA.001, p. 25a, 1995).
- *the formulation of a school sex education programme* (PAU/PER.005, 1995).
- *a display of AIDS posters* (PAU/ARC.010, 1994; PAU/ARC.012,
1994; PAU/FLD.019, 1995).
- *teaching on issues of abortion and homosexuality*
(PAU/LEA.001 p. 24a, 1995).
- *budget allocation and control* (PAU/LEA.001, p. 19, 1995).

Physical Environment

The respective school buildings have little similarity in style, construction or organisational arrangement. The most obvious and significant difference between them is the split-site arrangement of St. Paul's which is organised into two parallel schools. However, because there is not an absolute duplication of facilities, most noticeably so in respect of sixth form accommodation, there are some logistical difficulties with inter-site travelling for staff and pupils (PAU/LEA.001, pp. 7, 8, 12, 1995; PAU/FLD.028, 1995). St. Peter's, in contrast, is compactly arranged on a single site with only the design and technology facilities

separated by a few yards from the main building. In addition, it had been possible for me to allocate rooms to the faculties in such a way as to provide a high degree of suiteing enabling an ease of communication and access for staff and pupils that is denied to St. Paul's.

Most of St. Peter's buildings were built in 1938-39. They are substantial and quite well maintained. On my appointment I found them to be clean, attractive and free of both graffiti and vandalism. The maintenance of an attractive environment in which to teach and learn was important priority for me. That the school environment encouraged effective learning was commented upon favourably by OFSTED inspectors (PET/DOC.005, p. 14, 1995). In comparison St. Paul's buildings are described by a number of people as being disreputable (PAU/INT.003; 005, 1994). During the period of my mentoring in 1986 I had noted that St. Paul's buildings looked quite shabby (PET/PER.004, para. 2, 1986). The same observation was made by candidates for the headteacher appointment in 1988 (PAU/ARC.002, p. 7, 11, 1988), and when his successor was appointed in 1995 (PAU/PER.004, 1995; PAU/FLD.024, 1995; PAU/FLD.032, p. 2, 1995). It would seem that the physical environment of St. Paul's has probably been rather unpleasant for over a decade, which perhaps justifies the observation of one LEA officer following her first visit to St. Paul's of "how appallingly dirty it is" and her wonder at "the attitude of governors who allow the school to get into such a state" (PAU/FLD.034, 1995).

Summary

There are very noticeable differences between the socio-economic status of the areas of Loamshire that the schools serve, the nature of the communities that they have become and the environment for learning that they provide for their respective pupils. But the differing personal backgrounds of its pupils and the physical circumstances of school buildings need not necessarily impact upon the culture of learning that a particular school

develops. The nature of personal relationships, attitudes towards learning and achievement, the effectiveness of the teaching methods employed can all be independent of the physical circumstances within which they take place.

School Culture

Introduction

The aggregation of attitudes and values expressed through the formal and informal structures of any institution establishes the overall culture, which, in varying degrees, helps or hinders the achievement of the institution's prime purpose. St. Paul's and St. Peter's, with many similar but not totally identical objectives, have their own ways of doing things. While their prime purposes as Catholic schools are defined by the same trust deed, and their secular purposes by education law, there is clearly scope for interpretation of the relevant documents and, therefore, legitimately differing methods designed to achieve similar ends.

Management Structures

Because of the school's circumstances, but also because of my own background and inclinations, I devoted a great deal of time to developing what I believed to be a coherent staffing and curriculum structure for St. Peter's providing real delegation of authority with clear responsibilities and lines of accountability. As people got used to the idea the system seemed to be accepted by all concerned, albeit with differing degrees of enthusiasm and understanding:

"In most cases staff, especially the head, insisted that the pupils must be put first. Some staff, perhaps, didn't like it but that is how it should be"

(Governor), (PET/INT.002, 1994).

"By and large [they are] good quality, committed staff ... committed to children as opposed to viewing it as a job, a way of earning a living"

(Governor), (PET/INT.003, 1994).

"[Staff accepted] the need for change [but had] emotional resistance to do so. Few staff formed major opposition to be obstructive. Most were accepting but wary. [The headteacher was] prepared to stand out against some staff resistance ... I was very determined to bring my faculty into line with the head's approach"

(Teacher), (PET/INT.005, 1994).

"[There is] real delegation [which] makes people do things by giving them freedom. The faculty heads have to organise groups, have to make decisions [but are] also made responsible ... like [headteachers] of little schools"

(Teacher), (PET/INT.007, 1995).

"The school knows where it is going and this is communicated well to staff and pupils ... I like the hierarchical and line management system ... [We] probationer's were helped ... [senior] staff wanted us to succeed. ... Being able to take part in policy making make me feel very good ... both within the faculty and working groups"

(Teacher), (PET/INT.008, 1995).

In contrast, the headteacher of St. Paul's, preoccupied with changing styles of leadership, staff involvement and interpersonal relationships, has not devoted much time to developing formal structures for school management and accountability in response to the new demands of the 1988 Education Act. Consequently, a review of its management organisation, undertaken jointly in 1995 by LEA and diocesan officers shortly after the headteacher left St. Paul's, highlights a number of structural deficiencies which they regard as militating against organisational clarity and effectiveness:

"The teaching staff are dedicated to the school and its pupils. There is some excellent work being done. However, the successes of the school seem to rely on individual rather than on structural excellence, and there are a large number of structural weaknesses, which, if addressed, should provide a much more coherent support for future development.

- 1. The school seems to have no stated aims or objectives, but does have a very clear 'Ethos Statement'.*
- 2. All seem to agree about the pervasiveness of the school's ethos. However, there is little agreement as to what it is or how it is or should be implemented in respect of a number of school policies, including admissions, appointments, exclusions and examination entries.*
- 3. The relationship between the respective roles of Governors and staff seems confused. There does not appear to be a clear distinction made between the legitimate role of Governors to determine policy and that of Senior Staff to implement it on a day to day basis. Often staff seem to be excessively involved in the process of establishing policy, sometimes working with*

Governors, sometimes in parallel with them. The attendance of individuals, other than Governors, at formal meetings does not always seem to be under the control of the Governing body. Requests of individuals to give advice or provide specific expertise at one meeting sometimes seems to be taken as an open ended invitation to attend all Governors meetings. The consequent status of such individuals, as observers, advisers, or shapers of policy, is also not always clear and can change from meeting to meeting without any apparent agreement by the Governing body.

4. *Few staff appear to have job descriptions defining their roles that are agreed by the Principal or Governors. Some that do have such documents in their possession wrote them themselves. In addition, there seems to be some confusion whether 'what I do' and 'my job description' are one and the same thing.*
5. *The respective roles of individual Senior Staff are not explicit, and it is not always easy to see the nature of the expected relationship between them. This may have arisen, to some extent, because of the number of Senior Staff who have resigned for one reason or another over the past few months.*
6. *The interaction between the teaching and disciplinary roles of Departmental Heads is not spelt out. Some seem to think they have no disciplinary role, others that it forms an essential part of their teaching responsibilities.*
7. *The relationship between the respective roles of the Heads of Hall and Heads of Year with that of the academic Departmental Heads is not clear.*
8. *The school seems to have been living beyond its means for some time, depending upon parental contributions to meet essential budgetary requirements. In part this is caused by the size and cost of the management structure and possible duplication of tasks within it. While some adaptations to the structure have been made, because of resignations and one deputy becoming Acting Principal, these seem to be ad hoc rather than part of an overall agreed strategy. (It is realised that such a strategy depends, in part, on the appointment of a new Principal).*
9. *There appear to be a plethora of tasks within the school for which allowances have been given. The result, according to one witness, is a more expensive system than the one it has replaced. There does not seem to be a coherent strategy either in terms of efficiency or effectiveness for this distribution of resources followed by the Senior Management or the Governors.*
10. *The chosen solution to the inherent problems of a split site arrangement seems to have produced an expensive 'parallel school' management structure. There was evidence from a number of witnesses suggesting that the current arrangements, and the way in which they operate, have not been successful in establishing a single corporate identity.*
11. *There appears to be no clear commonly held understanding in a number of crucial areas:*
 - *The meaning of 'Catholic principles' when applied to the school structure, organisation and teaching methods.*

- *Whether 'Catholic' and 'Christian' are synonymous terms.*
- *The meaning of 'Pastoral Care'; where the responsibility for it lies, and how it differs from pupil administration.*
- *Where it is essential that staff appointments should be restricted to baptised, practising Catholics.*
- *The meaning of 'Child-Centred Education', and what areas of learning or activities can legitimately be generated by pupils alone, need to be undertaken in collaboration with staff and/or parents, or should be determined by the teachers.*
- *The difference between teaching processes and teaching outcomes.*
- *Appropriate means for evaluating school and pupil achievement.*

The findings show a school without a clear agreed and understood structure within which the excellent work of many individuals can be harnessed. A coherent and corporate structure is essential for effective planning, which can only be for the long term benefit of everyone not least the pupils. There is a great deal of work required."
(PAU/ARC.009, pp. 3-4, 1995).

On face value the report is damning. However, it seems to leave to one side questions about the quality of education the school's management structure provides and concentrates on the mechanisms for determining corporate policies and controlling and monitoring their effects. It assumes the superiority of a formal structured functionalist model of school administration in which agreed corporate policies are uniformly imposed and rigorously monitored, and uses it as a paradigm against which St. Paul's management structure is assessed. There is little attempt to identify any human strengths in the model that has been adopted and in which staff have expressed their appreciation.

Financial Management

There is insufficient documentation available to me to make accurate assessments across a number of years of the relative income/expenditure per pupil in the two schools. The difference in their size and local authority funding arrangements intended to reflect the added costs of post-16 pupils and the split site at St. Paul's also hinders meaningful comparisons of their delegated budgets.

Some rough comparison can be made, however, of the relative levels of funding in addition to the delegated budget, for example from parental contributions and income from lettings. St. Paul's, with a roll of around one thousand, two hundred and fifty has about twice the number of pupils as St. Peter's. The total additional income at St. Peter's for the financial year 1994/95 was ten thousand, four hundred pounds (PET/DOC.009, 1995), approximately one third as much as the that generated by St. Paul's. Parental contributions to the 1994/95 budget at St. Paul's was £33,000 (PAU/LEA.001, p. 38a, 1995) ten times the sum donated to St. Peter's. Overall, the income per pupil attending St Paul's in 1994/95 was two thousand, one hundred and eighty-one pounds and sixty-six pence. The equivalent figure for St. Peter's was two thousand and forty-eight pounds, thirty-four pence, but the circumstances of the two schools do not allow the income differential to be translated, necessarily, into a similar difference in expenditure per pupil. Consequently, a comparison of the relative financial efficiency of the two schools is not calculable from the available data.

Despite the high level of financial support from parents St. Paul's finds it difficult to keep within its budget (PAU/LEA.001, p. 58, para. 9, 1995). For example, in 1994-95, after depleting its contingency funds it overspent its budget by approximately one hundred and thirty to two hundred thousand pounds in. Following a number of teacher redundancies and the non-replacement of retiring staff that was necessary in order to produce a balanced budget for 1995-96, the school again overspent and faces an indicative budget deficit for 1996-97 of approximately one hundred thousand pounds despite an expected increase in its roll to one thousand, three hundred and twenty (PAU/FLD.044, 1995). In comparison, St. Peter's manages to keep within budget, maintaining, according to OFSTED inspectors, an appropriate contingency reserve and providing good value for money (PET/DOC.008, 1995; PET/DOC.009, 1995).

Reasons for the seeming lack of financial probity at St. Paul's appear to lie in its history. Its first headteacher complained that the level of financial resource from the local authority was insufficient to implement his school vision (PAU/PER.001, para. 46, 1993). To overcome the difficulty he recruited a number of additional unpaid staff, encouraged high levels of parental contributions, acquired a number of grants from outside bodies and sometimes made significant personal funds available to the school. The result was to create the impression of abundant resources and enable a staffing policy to develop that, in time, has become insupportable. Long serving teachers find the current financial constraints difficult to cope with, recognising the lack of resources but being unwilling to face the consequential necessary economies which impact upon the school's traditionally wide curriculum and small class sizes. They comment:

"There [used to be] lots of money [which] allowed pupil autonomy ... [the headteacher] had a millionaire brother ..." (PAU/LEA.001, p. 9a, 1995).
"The level of administration has had to increase because of local management of schools etc., ... [we need] more resources" (PAU/LEA.001, p. 10a, 1995).
"Departments should be properly funded, allowances [should] reflect status, [we need] an increase in staff and capital" (PAU/LEA.001, p. 19, 1995).
"[There is] a lack of contingency money" (PAU/LEA.001, p.22, 1995).

Concern about the school's financial problems is evident within St. Paul's governing body. While its control is clearly their legal responsibility, they do not appear able to exercise their authority effectively. There are divisions among them concerning the responsibility for the present financial difficulties, with some aggressively blaming the headteacher for the resultant problems that they face (PAU/DOC.011, 1994).

Academic Emphasis and Curriculum Structure

Curriculum decisions made by both myself and the headteacher of St. Paul's were influenced by our understanding of Catholic principles in respect of the needs of individual pupils. However, the way in which our common concern finds expression in the school

curriculum structures and organisation is markedly different. At St. Peter's universality of educational experience is stressed; St. Paul's values as much diversity as possible.

The organisational structure of St. Peter's, which aims to encourage a sense of shared cultural identity through its a common curriculum experience, was very similar to, though pre-dating, the National Curriculum as it appeared in its initial form. There is some element of choice for pupils in Years 10 and 11, but it is severely limited. With few exceptions, courses at Key Stage Four are externally examined with one of the GCSE boards. All pupils are expected to be entered for a minimum of eight examinations, the majority for ten with a small number taking additional examinations, usually minority languages such as Urdu or Italian. I expected teachers to take responsibility for ensuring that pupils in their care did not fail academically (PET/INT.002, p. 6, 1994; PET/INT.005, p. 8, 1994; PET/INT.007, p. 2a, 1995). The attitude of expected achievement, which respondents note, is expressed in a school discussion document reviewing St. Peter's curriculum strategy:

"As a Catholic institution we have a religious duty to help our pupils to make the fullest use of their talents. If pupils do not achieve success academically we have failed in our duty as teachers and we have failed them. (Think of each pupil as if he or she was your own child. Would you not do everything in your power to ensure their success?)
(PET/DOC.011, para. 25, 1991).

St. Paul's, on the other hand, finds the thrust of the National Curriculum planning running very much counter to their established strategy of providing the widest curriculum choice and personal autonomy for pupils. Within the constraints that it imposes, the school retains as open a curriculum structure as possible, providing greater choice than at St. Peter's. It places much greater emphasis and responsibility onto pupils to determine their own curriculum. The emphasis on the personal autonomy of the individual learner is illustrated by comments in the staff handbook which states:

"It is part of the learning experience for pupils to exercise choice and initiative. It must be accepted that children will make mistakes and will need support and guidance as they re-discover their way"

(PAU/DOC.007, p. 7, para. 1993).

St. Paul's prospectus for 1992-93 describes a similar core curriculum to that provided at St. Peter's for Years Seven, Eight and Nine. Slightly less time is allocated to the compulsory elements, particularly to religious education, leaving time for cross-curricula topics and optional modular mini-courses. For pupils in Years 10 and 11 a wide range of options are available to supplement a relatively small compulsory core. In addition to twenty examination subjects, a further twenty-seven optional courses are available, most of them designed to be leisure or non-examination activities (PAU/DOC.005, pp. 4-7, 1992). Pupils are advised to take no more than eight examination courses. Many take less and it is expected that some pupils will not take any (PAU/DOC.005, p. 5 1992). This pattern seems to be the desired result of the school's emphasis on pupils making choices and taking responsibility for the consequences of their own decisions.

Teaching Methods

Just as the schools' approach to curriculum organisation represented almost opposite ends of the spectrum of responses to the constraints of the National Curriculum, so do their respective view of teaching methods, although both are described by a large number of interviewees as being child-centred (e.g. PET/INT.005, p. 2, 1994; PAU/INT.002, p. 2, 1994). Clearly, there are different interpretations of what the phrase means.

Within the restricted curriculum structure of St. Peter's, I encourage staff to adopt the teaching method and pupil organisation which they feel is most effective and appropriate (PET/INT.005, p. 2, 1994; PET/INT.007, p. 5, 1995). In contrast, St. Paul's demanded, for many years, a particular teaching approach in which it set great store (PAU/PER.001, para. 26, 27, 1993; PAU/LEA.001, p. 21, 1995). Though the constraints of National

Curriculum and the introduction of new staff have softened the rigidity of approach, there is still a great emphasis on activity, experience and open-ended enquiry to facilitate exploration in as free, open and frank way as possible (PAU/DOC.007, pp. 7, 9).

Discussion and debate are central to this approach and didactic methods discouraged in the pursuit of autonomous learning (PAU/DOC.005, p. 4, 1992).

The perception of local authority officers is that the St. Peter's approach is supportive of pupils irrespective of their intellectual ability or socio-economic background and, consequently, contributes to the levels of academic achievement (PET/INT.001, pp. 1, 2, 1994). In comparison, they have concerns over the "high numbers of pupils obtaining no GCSE examination successes" at St. Paul's (PAU/FLD.018, 1995). It is suggested that the teaching method favoured by St. Paul's is "only appropriate for middle class liberals [while] pupils from poorer backgrounds [are] either unable to cope or allowed to fail within a system to which they can not easily relate" (PAU/FLD.018, 1995). Certainly, of the St. Paul's pupils who obtained no GCSE passes in 1992 ($n = 5$), or less than five points in total, the equivalent of one subject at grade C ($n = 7$), a large majority, some seventy-five per cent, were from lower socio-economic groups. The thrust of St. Peter's approach is to place great emphasis on pupil's outcomes within a structure that is based on pupil needs as perceived by teachers. At St. Paul's it is the process of learning, personal autonomy and 'good' pupil-teacher relationships. The differing emphases means that teachers exert open control of the process and dominate the content of the material of learning at St Peter's to a much greater extent than at St. Paul's. They also take on greater responsibility for the level of pupil achievement.

Pupil Experiences of Teaching and Learning

Pupils in both schools commented on the high levels of personal support and friendship they received from teaching staff.

"Teachers are very friendly ... If you have a problem, because of the friendship thing, you can go and get help. ... The use of first names helps and emphasises friendship, it builds up more respect"

(Girl, non-Catholic, St. Paul's), (PAU/INT.012, 1995).

"Teachers were not just teachers, most of them tried to be more ... you knew they wanted to help"

(Girl, Catholic, St. Peter's), (PER/INT.011, 1995).

"[The best thing about being a pupil at St. Paul's is] the relationships between pupils and staff. They show interest and enthusiasm in you"

(Boy, non-Catholic, St. Paul's), (PAU/INT.011, 1995).

"The majority of teachers seem to care even when they shout at me or send me out of the class"

(Boy, Catholic, St. Peter's), (PET/INT.010, 1994).

You knew you could rely on people, the teachers, to help with any problem however big or minor"

(Boy, non-Catholic, St. Peter's), (PET/INT.014, 1995).

"Relationships are very good. [It is] easy to go to teachers [for help]"

(Boy, non-Catholic, St. Paul's), (PAU/INT.009, 1995).

The pupils in both schools regard their relationships with staff most highly and comment favourably upon them. Both schools have placed great emphasis on caring for their pupils. However, good pastoral care in itself is not a necessary requisite for effective learning. Indeed, "failing schools often appear to be caring places ..." (DFEE/OFSTED, 1995, para. 49) though, on the other hand, a caring attitude can also be a mark of a successful school.

Within the caring environments provided by the two schools, pupils noted significant differences in teaching style which affected the way the demands placed upon them in lessons. Staff at St. Peter's were expected to push their pupils, regarding the achievement of pupils potential as a mark of the school's care for them. The responsibility placed on staff at St. Peter's to prevent failure is seen as one way in which the pupils felt they were being helped to achieve the best possible academic success of which they were capable:

"[You are] expected to work hard. In some subjects very hard, others not so hard. Some of the [GCSE] syllabus' were easier. I don't think many people thought they were overworked. People though 'that's just how it is' and got on with it. Even though I did a lot of work at home I had time for social life"

(Girl), (PET/INT.011, 1995).

"Teachers seemed bothered about making you work. ... In Year Eleven [I had] 2 - 2½ hours homework [a night]"

(Boy), (PET/INT.010, 1994).

"It was always full and busy. [There was] lots of work for English and Science. I look back at the number of [exercise] books I've got and there are loads"

(Girl), (PET/INT.012, 1995).

"There was a lot of it [work during each day]. Comparing with friends afterwards at [Sixth Form] college we seem to have more, especially in English"

(Girl), (PET/INT.013, 1995).

[The work] was probably as much as I could cope with. We were especially pushed in the last year"

(Boy), (PET/INT.014, 1995).

In contrast, the regime at St. Paul's which, while seen by pupils to be providing "good teaching, good instructions on how to do well" (PAU/INT.011, 1995), puts a high priority on self-motivation and personal autonomy. The sixth form pupils that I interviewed clearly appreciate and enjoy the atmosphere it generates within the classroom and its effect on the relationships that they have with their teachers. However, they also suggest that the St. Paul's approach to pupil-centred learning leads to an apparent reluctance on the part of staff to push pupils and a tolerance of academic under achievement if that is the choice of the individual. Pupils commented:

"In lower school you do next to no work. Very little in years 8 and 9, next to nothing. I didn't do much at all. Not much [in years 10 and 11] until course work had to be in. In Sixth Form I am working solidly. [It was] a big transition [which is] not so noticeable in other schools ... The streamless system [in mathematics] is quite easy and fun. You work at your own pace [but] lots of people get left behind ... Teachers never demonstrate on the board. I had to push myself [and] lots of people have reservations. It is not very effective ... if you need pushing St. Paul's is not for you"

(Boy), (PAU/INT.009, 1995).

"If you want to work [St. Paul's] is OK. Its only really for those who are self-motivated. You can become lazy and need discipline. [In Yr. 10] I did not do a an ounce of work. I began to work in fits and starts [in Yr. 11]. There is not a great deal of help or support for the less able unless they are in great need. If you are just not very bright you just have to stick at it yourself"

(Girl), (PAU/INT.010, 1995).

"You are trusted [by teachers] to get on. [Their] general policy [is] we do not force you to do as much homework as you should do ... I'm a very conscientious sort of person [but] some people would benefit from being forced"

(Boy), (PAU/INT.011, 1995).

"The emphasis is on you, you are not forced to work so you enjoy it more. I took eight GCSEs, the maximum. I could have taken non exam subjects if I wanted, my sister is taking lots, she is not really interested in academic work. [At 'A' level

there is] an emphasis on self study with the friendship of staff to support, but it is down to you" (Girl), (PAU/INT.012, 1995).

On the other hand, the vast majority of those people closely connected with St. Paul's whom I interviewed, such as teachers or governors, regard the school's academic achievements achieved through this approach as extremely good, almost exemplary. A typical view is recorded in the headteacher's appraisal where his main appraiser notes "The school is clearly ... an astonishingly successful school academically ..." (PAU/DOC.011, p. 18, 1994). My findings, reported in chapter 4, do not support such a view, yet only two staff, both members of senior management, have indicated that there might be an element of under achievement based on their assessment of the pupils' academic potential (PAU/LEA.001, p.21, 1995; PAU/INT.003, p. 5, 1994). However, the minority view prevails among LEA officers (PAU/FLD.013, 1994; PAU/FLD.018, 1995) and is noted by diocesan officers undertaking a pre-OFSTED audit who also reported to the governing body their concern at the length of time pupils spent in class:

"At present [academic year 1994/95], the total teaching time (twenty-three hours and forty minutes) is below the minimum (twenty-four hours) recommended by the Secretary of State for pupils aged 12 - 16 years old" (PAU/DOC.012, p. 2, 1995).

Religious Education - Courses and Examinations

Religious education is regarded as a core activity throughout both schools, though it is given different labels. What St. Peters label 'Religious Education', St. Paul's calls 'Theology'. Before 1988 in St. Paul's there had been little formal religious lessons for pupils until they joined the Sixth Form (PAU/FLD.039, 1995) since the headteacher clearly disliked the type of religious education courses readily available and used in other parts of the diocese. What was offered was a course of the headteacher's personal creation:

"[which] enabled the children to lie fallow after the excessive husbandry of the primary schools. In their third year there was a philosophy option and a compulsory introduction to various religious ideas. ... In the fourth and fifth years there were two compulsory units - the idea of God and Christology - [and a] choice of four or five options which would vary each term ... Through the sixth form the basic theology continued with a menu of several options ..."

(PAU/PER.001, para. 54, 55, 1993).

From his description of the school in its early years, the headteacher was stimulated by, and greatly valued, the technique of philosophical and theological conversation that characterised his pedagogical approach and formed the basis of what became to be proclaimed as the St. Paul's teaching method. It was clearly a very important element in the defining characteristics of the school. Undoubtedly it had an influence on the school culture the headteacher wished to develop. Some current long-serving senior members of staff differ from him in their assessment of its worth, impact and legacy, suggesting that the approach was more beneficial to well educated adult teachers than youngsters and, perhaps, geared to adult needs and aspirations rather than the pupils in the school community. They comment about this pedagogical culture:

"There was lots of discussion in the staffroom about theological and religious matters but [it] was not put into practice in school. [It was] a sort of intellectual club not connected with reality"

(PAU/INT.003, p. 6, 1994).

"[The headteacher's] team of unpaid counsellors have left a legacy [where] half [the staff] think they were the [school's] salvation, half say they lived on cloud nine. [That] middle class monastic approach won't wash in [the] current educational climate"

(PAU/LEA.001, p. 9a, 1995).

In 1988, the new headteacher introduced some formal R.E. lessons for pupils below Year 10 representing approximately five per cent of the available curriculum time, half that recommended by the Diocesan Religious Advisers. Currently, at Key Stages 3 and 4, St. Paul's pupils follow a general syllabus based on the Diocesan programme but "there is little evidence of it being followed in a systematic manner" (PAU/ARC.014, p.5, 1995).

Lessons are organised on a modular basis and pupils have some choice. They are not examined unless they specifically opt to follow a GCSE course. Theology is also offered at 'A' level but no-one had been entered for examination at either level during the period covered by this research, i.e. 1986-1994. Possible reasons for this include the quality of teaching provided by staff and the low status accorded to the department within the school. The nature of any causal connection between the two is, however, outside the scope of this study.

Over the same period St. Peter's have used Diocesan approved syllabus' and the subject is regarded as one in which all pupils are to be externally examined irrespective of their particular religious allegiance. In contrast to St. Paul's, the department is held in high esteem within the school and its levels of pupil achievement in GCSE examinations is among the best obtained by any department. Table XI illustrates that over the period 1986-94 there has been a steady and significant rise in the numbers choosing to take theology or religious studies at 'A' level. Many take Theology as undergraduates at university (PET/DOC.005, 1995).

Table XI

A' LEVEL RELIGIOUS STUDIES/THEOLOGY - ST. PETER'S

YEAR	N.O.R.	PUPIL Nos	% N.O.R.	% 6th Fm
1985	153	1	0.7	4.2
1986	147	2	1.4	12.5
1987	175	2	1.1	5.9
1988	166	3	1.8	8.1
1989	146	1	0.7	3.8
1990	147	4	2.7	8.9
1991	144	5	3.5	12.2
1992	150	5	3.3	11.4
1993	144	8	5.6	17.4
1994	152	14	9.2	23.7

Catholic Education - Its Nature and Purpose

The different approaches to religious education is both a cause and a result of variations in understanding of the concept of Catholic education held by the diverse groups connected with the two institutions. There seems to be little evidence of fundamental disagreement between parents, staff and governors at St. Peter's that the faithful transmission of the received body of Catholic faith is its proper and most important function. The issue does not seem to be a matter of serious concern or debate within the school or wider community of Riverside, rather one of an acceptance of the traditional position; namely that Catholic schools are provided for baptised Catholic pupils but, if places are available, non-Catholics may be admitted provided that there is no adverse effect of the character of the school (Archdiocese of Birmingham, 1995a; Konstant, 1996). Policy and practice at St. Peter's, therefore, is designed to achieve that primary purpose for the faith community.

In comparison, in its early years under its first headteacher, St. Paul's consciously and deliberately rejected this traditional model of Catholic school (PAU/PER.001. para. 13, 1993). The residue of those early decisions are still potent, though their clarity has diminished. At the time of this study different interpretations of the school's Catholic nature and primary purpose abound and the divergence of views can be seen in a variety of ways. For example, governor concerns arose because of a teaching process that built on the children's own views on moral and ethical issues and, from the perspective of some, gave support to views that sometimes contradicted Catholic dogmatic and social teaching. Such disputes were, perhaps, an inevitable outcome of a teaching approach in which pupils were "encouraged to respond to different values and world views [than the Catholic Church] in a sympathetic manner" (PAU/DOC.007, p. 7, para 13, 1993) and governors who believed part of their role was to ensure that in a Catholic school the teachings of the Church were faithfully transmitted. I have notes both in my fieldwork diary and from other

sources indicating that within the governing body there are some who regard St. Paul's Catholic nature as separate and distinct from the usual pattern of diocesan provision:

Catholic authorities in the school are so anxious not to offend non-Catholics [that it] leads to great tensions" (Catholic Governor), (PAU/INT.007, 1995).

"St Paul's is very much a world within a world and closer links with the outside Catholic world could be stronger"

(Catholic Governor), (PAU/ARC.008, 1994).

Some [non-Catholic] members argued that the Ordinary of the Diocese has no right to express a public opinion on the nature and purpose of the school yet alone become actively involved in its development (PAU/FLD.010, p. 1, 1994).

The governing body, as a whole, agreed to substitute 'Christian' for the word 'Catholic' in literature distributed to candidates for the headship appointment in 1995. (PAU/ARC.007, 1994).

Against a background where approximately forty per cent of Catholic pupils expected to attend St. Paul's choose to go elsewhere, two elected parent governors voted and an elected teacher, voted against a motion to maximise the Catholic intake (PAU/FLD.027, 1995).

In response to a parental query at the 1994 Annual Governors Meeting with Parents the governors acknowledged that they had no R.E. policy.

(PAU/FLD.026, 1995).

When one of the two chapels is refurbished by pupils to be returned to its designated use, "the students wanted the chapel to be a capsule of peace and tranquillity based on forms derived from nature" (PAU/DOC.013) and, consequently, explicitly Catholic icons were not used (PAU/FLD.017, p. 2, 1994).

"There were certain irreconcilable things ... [the school's] unacceptability to a small number of governors. The tension in terms of the debate about the nature of the school. All of these things, no doubt, are still there"

(Headteacher), (PAU/INT.001, para. 599 - 609, 1994).

The current tensions mentioned by the headteacher to me are evident from the disparity among staff views of the school. For example:

"I know that criticism [that the school failed to nurture Catholic faith] exists. I cannot see the evidence for it ... I've had this thrown at me by one of our chaplains" (Headteacher), (PAU/INT.001, para. 349, 361, 1994).

"[I am] uncomfortable with a straight Catholic line on, for example, AIDS education, abortion and homosexuality and have to think seriously about my own position at school" (Teacher, non-Catholic), (PAU/LEA.001, p. 24a, 1995).

"I promote [the] Catholicity of St. Paul's. I'm very happy to encourage mass attendance" (Senior tutor, non-Catholic), (PAU/LEA.001, p. 9a, 1995).

I [now feel able to] tell parents that pupils are valued because they are of divine origin. Once I would not have been so brave [as to say so publicly]"

(Long serving senior teacher, Catholic), (PAU/INT.003, 1994).

"The Catholic underpinnings [of the school] are implicit and integral rather than explicit and external"

(Teacher, Catholic), (PAU/INT.005, 1994).

"The school ethos is Christian rather than Catholic. ... [and] attempts to be inclusive, tries to be ecumenical"

(Teacher, Catholic), (PAU/INT.006, 1994).

"I came here expecting a real Catholic atmosphere in the school. I haven't found it"

(Teacher, non-Catholic), (PAU/FLD.041, 1995).

Parents also seem to have mixed expectations of St. Paul's status and practice as a Catholic school.

"A Jewish parent told me he sent his [older] children to St. Paul's because it was not very Catholic but is now concerned about the emphasis on Catholicity"

(Catholic Governor), (PAU/INT.007, 1995).

"As an Humanist and not a Catholic ... my children have done a lot better here [than in a county school] ..."

(Parent), (PAU/ARC.003, para. 17, 1993).

"I cannot conceive a Catholic school which is inward looking. In fact only fifty per cent of the school's population is Catholic ... As a parent what I want ... is the same as the Principal of the school, that the nature of the school continues and I am opposed to watering down the way in which the admission policy works. I certainly want it to be open as it is now ..."

(Catholic Parent), (PAU/ARC.003, para. 13, 1993).

"My [baptised Catholic] daughter made up her own mind to be confirmed because of St. Paul's ... we put no pressure on her. We did not practice and agreed to let her make up her own mind when she was old enough. She has brought me back into the Church"

(Catholic Parent), (PAU/FLD.031, 1995).

"I never had a major bust-up with a [Catholic] parent to do with their children's religious development or their faith development ... Many of the Catholic parents who spoke to me could see that the form of Catholic education their children were getting was far better than anything they had ... Its liberal approach to the children's own particular inner life was what they, the parents, wanted"

(Headteacher), (PAU/INT.001, para. 426 -437, 1994).

"I asked what the schools policy was because my daughter wanted to know why she wasn't taught proper R.E."

(Catholic Parent), (PAU/FLD.026, p. 3, 1995).

"A parent felt the school lacked a Catholic atmosphere"

(PAU/MIN.011, p. 3, 1995).

In my formal interviews with pupils attending the two schools I asked them to give illustrations of the Catholic nature of their school. There were different emphases in their

answers. The St Paul's pupils found it a particularly difficult task though, after some thought, all pointed to the masses at Christmas and Easter. Their answers also suggest that explicitly Catholic practices and behaviour at St. Paul's are very much peripheral activities.

"It is not strongly Catholic. There is not much that you have to do. Theology is more like philosophy ... the top [senior] staff have to be Catholic"

(Boy, non-Catholic), (PAU/INT.009, 1995).

"Apart from the masses [there are] no outstanding [Catholic] features"

(Girl, Catholic), (PAU/INT.010, 1995).

"You can't tell who is Catholic ... If I didn't want to I would never notice it [is a Catholic school] ... You do not have to join in Catholic ceremonies ... I go to the Christmas mass ... Theology [here] is not just about Catholic religion ... there is nothing [in the school] that would cause a problem to non-Catholics"

(Boy, non-Catholic), (PAU/INT.011, 1995).

"Religion is not forced upon you ... Theology [lessons are about] a broad range of other religions"

(Girl, non-Catholic), (PAU/INT.012, 1995).

St. Peter's pupils also found it difficult to specify examples other than school masses and major liturgical events. No-one mentioned the large number of pupil produced religious artefacts around the school and in the chapel, perhaps taking them for granted, but they were prepared to assert that there was a distinctive emphasis on matters Catholic and acknowledge that it influenced their lives even if they could not identify specific events or activities. For some the school regime was a natural extension of their Catholic family lifestyle. For others it was a new but welcomed experience.

"The attitudes of the school are based on Catholicism ... There is a specifically Catholic education but no such thing as Catholic mathematics or woodwork"

(Boy, Catholic), (PET/INT.010, 1994).

"I had several thoughts about what to do at 'A' level but it was always Religious Studies and two others. [My choice] was because of school, partly because of the subject itself, partly because of the way it was taught ... liturgies were just natural ... we go to Church at home so we did at school"

(Girl, Catholic), (PET/INT.011, 1995).

"School definitely affected me religiously ... It has deepened my faith ... I have joined Katimavik [prayer group] ... I feel I have changed because of St. Peter's ..."

They [the teachers] just have an aura about them, a very strong Christian outlook on life, it come through" (Girl, non-Catholic), (PET/INT.013, 1995).

"It is very difficult to explain ... everyone pulling in the same direction, everyone involved in everything that is done" (Boy, non-Catholic), (PET/INT.014, 1995).

"In my third year I began thinking about being a Catholic when I could get more involved in a mass ... I did not do anything about it until I left. I'm glad I've found something ... It taught me everything I know about religion ... I went to Church [and] enjoyed it. One I started to go I wanted to become a full part [i.e. a Catholic]" (Boy, convert to Catholicism), (PET/INT.015, 1994).

"R.E. lessons were brilliant ... I learned a lot. They had a real impact ..." (Girl, Catholic), (PET/INT.016, 1994).

"[My] involvement with Katimavik in singing at mass led to thinking about becoming a Catholic. I wanted to know more" (Boy, convert to Catholicism), (PET/INT.017, 1994).

Catholic Culture - Meeting the Needs of the Individual

Both schools publicly express their concern for the individual pupils and their needs as a tenet of Catholic education, recognising and affirming their intrinsic value irrespective of personality, talents, achievements or background (PAU/DOC.005, p.16, 1992; PET/DOC.001, pp. 5, 5a, 33, 33a, 1991; PET/DOC.002, pp. 9, 9a, 1992). A firm stance opposing pupil bullying in all its forms and providing personal care and emotional support for individuals is cited by many of the interviewees as a prime example of this philosophy in action. Both schools express a particular concern for the poor, disadvantaged and weak which seems to be borne out in their admission criteria and practices, though the headteacher of St. Paul's feels that such openness is not always recognised by some working class parents who do not believe the school is appropriate for their children (PAU/INT.001, paras. 39-43).

In both schools pupils clearly understand that care and concern for each other is something that is both preached and held dear. St. Peter's pupils speak of the sense of security and friendship provided within the school, though one girl, while acknowledging that a mutually supportive atmosphere existed, said she found there were some tensions between pupils arising out of the explicitly religious orientation of the school.

"In hindsight you were aware that there was a measure of conflict between those [pupils] who were actively trying to live a Catholic life and those who were rebelling , definitely in the last year" (Girl, Catholic), (PET/INT.016, 1994).

Similar conflict was not mentioned by any of the St. Paul's pupils I interviewed but the "taunting of Catholics, even by [other] Catholics" was noted by a teacher (PAU/LEA.001, p. 8a, 1995), and the headteacher commented that on his appointment he found older pupils particularly to be arrogant, self-centred and uncaring in their relationships with each other (PAU/FLD.003, 1993; PAU/PER.002, 1994). There is some evidence suggesting it may be a persisting characteristic, despite the current example and efforts of the headteacher and staff. A visiting school inspector notes that "interpersonal relationships are poor, [pupils show] little concern for each other (PAU/FLD.030, 1995). The same inspector, on the other hand, notes that St. Peter's pupils "display concern for the welfare of their peers" (PET/DOC.005, p. 14, 1995). A recent OFSTED report on St. Peter's also indicates pupils "usually show sensitivity and care towards one another" (PET/DOC.008, para. 19) which broadly supports the comments of pupils, parents and others associated with the school (PET/INT.015, 1994; PET/INT.002, p. 5, 1994; PET/INT.006, p. 5, 1995).

Pupil Exclusions

Despite the very similar expressions of the paramount importance of respect and care for one another, patterns of actual pupil behaviour highlighted in the two school's respective disciplinary records are very different. In the academic years 1991-92 there were thirty-seven pupil exclusions from St. Paul's, two from St. Peter's. As a percentage of the school roll this represents a ten-fold difference and reflects a pattern of high numbers of exclusions from St. Paul's (PET/DOC.010; PET/DOC.008, para. 18, 1995; PAU/DOC.016; PAU/FLD.033). Comparisons across the county are difficult since

information does not exist for all schools. Consequently, it is not possible to make an exact longitudinal comparison across the original sample. The majority of exclusions in

Table XII

PUPIL EXCLUSIONS 1987 - 1992

	1987 - 1988			1988 - 1989			1989 - 1990			1990 - 1991			1991 - 1992			1987 - 1992		
SCHOOL	Roll	Excl	%	Roll	Excl	%	Roll	Excl	%	Roll	Excl	%	Roll	Excl	%	Excl	Av/Yr	Av %
St. Peter's	614	2	0.3	593	4	0.7	592	0	0.0	594	1	0.2	601	2	0.3	9	1.8	0.30
1	921	2	0.2	883	3	0.3	857	0	0.0	877	9	1.0	887	7	0.8	21	4.2	0.47
2	583	13	2.2	524	7	1.3	466	15	3.2	428	15	3.5	404	40	9.9	90	18.0	3.74
3	694	44	6.3	618	26	4.2	521	17	3.3	471	17	3.6	427	12	2.8	116	23.2	4.25
4	754	3	0.4	730	3	0.4	706	6	0.8	640	16	2.5	612	21	3.4	49	9.8	1.42
5	502	38	7.6	514	23	4.5	494	11	2.2	426	10	2.3	434	29	6.7	111	22.2	4.68
6	868	0	0.0	815	0	0.0	773	2	0.3	798	18	2.3	864	17	2.0	37	7.4	0.90
7	740	14	1.9	694	17	2.4	666	7	1.1	648	13	2.0	615	14	2.3	65	13.0	1.93
8	1407	66	4.7	1354	52	3.8	1258	17	1.4	1203	31	2.6	1207	18	1.5	184	36.8	2.86
9	800	6	0.8	736	3	0.4	690	2	0.3	645	12	1.9	653	11	1.7	34	6.8	0.96
10	803	28	3.5	776	15	1.9	732	8	1.1	746	27	3.6	692	10	1.5	88	17.6	2.35
11	429	14	3.3	423	15	3.5	399	11	2.8	388	11	2.8	392	8	2.0	59	11.8	2.90
12	862	11	1.3	798	12	1.5	738	9	1.2	699	6	0.9	730	14	1.9	52	10.4	1.36
St. Paul's	1129	61	5.4	1131	n/a	n/a	1160	57	4.9	1231	29	2.4	1259	37	2.9	184	46.0	3.85

SOURCE: LOCAL EDUCATION AUTHORITY

Schools L, J, K, M and St. Paul's include 6th form pupils

For schools D and H exclusions in 1991-92 are for one term only - no data available for spring & summer terms

Data for St. Paul's not available for 1988-89

1991-92 from both the Catholic schools relate to bullying in one form or another. For example, an LEA officer indicated that the actions leading to exclusion at St. Paul's were:

"usually playground fights ... [and] the children being recommended for exclusion are predominantly working class, often from an Irish background. It appears that they find it more difficult to live up to the aspiration of non-violence than their middle class counterparts"
(PAU/FLD.021, 1995).

The number of exclusions from St. Paul's in 1991-92 are high enough to be regarded by OFSTED as indicative of a school with some serious weakness (OFSTED, 1995), though, on the other hand, they are about the national average recorded for secondary schools in 1994-95 (Woodhead, 1996). Yet they might have been even higher. The LEA officer

responsible for working with St. Paul's when pupils are excluded, indicated that the Headteacher's interpretation of the school's ethos often led him to overrule or reduce the exclusion recommendations of his senior staff (PAU/FLD.020, 1995). That large numbers of pupil at St. Paul's are excessively aggressive towards each other despite the strong message of tolerance preached by the school and the very real personal support given to pupils by teachers is surprising. Possible reasons may include social difficulties that some pupils experience with a school culture that differs markedly from that of their home background, or that a culture which stresses personal freedom more than corporate identity is less likely to encourage conformity to group norms of behaviour.

School Reputation

People outside the immediate school community seem to see St Peter's as a school at ease with itself and in its role, providing a strict, disciplined and hardworking environment, particularly supportive of the Catholic community it serves:

"[St. Peter's is] not far removed from being a family ... [with] a totally different atmosphere from other schools [in the locality]"

(Area education officer), (PER/INT.001, 1994).

"The atmosphere in the school was the best I have ever experienced in 40 years of teaching. The pupils were polite and hardworking. The enthusiasm of both pupils and staff was extremely impressive. You felt you were in a Catholic school. ... Each visit left me with a lasting impression that this indeed was the best Catholic Secondary School I have ever visited. ... here is one school [of] which the diocese can be very proud, even though it may be thought that Riverside is a one horse town"

(Extract -letter from a retired Catholic headteacher), (PET/ARC.002, 1991).

"I feel part of the school because everyone is nice to me. They look after me ... [I am] not aware of any naughty children [and left] wondering if they were naturally good ... I would have doors opened for me"

(A series of separate but connected statements by St Peter's Education Welfare Officer), (PER/INT.009, 1995).

Pupils also perceive of St. Peter's as a caring, supportive community in which they feel secure and valued (Morris, 1995). They are probably, but unknowingly, exaggerating the virtues of the school since they have few sources for comparison, just as many of the antagonistic comments about St. Paul's are perhaps distortions of reality especially as virtually all of its staff that I have interviewed, while recognising some difficulties, subscribe to and echo the headteacher's positive overall view of the school:

"It is a child-centred place; there is an awful lot of innovation; there are many good things It's a good place for children to be. It is genuinely trying to promote the whole person" (PAU/INT.001, paras. 58-9; 653-54, 1994).

On the other hand, they recognise that the school's reputation is not always what they would want it to be:

"At a professional level we have a reputation of being arrogant and stand-offish. I would want to break that down ... [Staff] are ahead in curriculum terms, innovative, proud and protective [feeling that] the school is under attack ... from foundation governors [with] their insistence on the type of Catholicity [they want]" (PAU/INT.003, p. 5, 1994).

"All agree in Wellchester we are a 'Progressive School'. [Pupils] wear no uniform and use Christian names [when talking to staff]. [Those in favour point to our] caring nature and good examination results. Anti [comments say] we have no discipline and are not traditionally Catholic. [There are] polarised views [which] develop a mythology based on a history of the institution" (PAU/INT.004, p. 2, 1994).

"Outside the area [it has] a very good academic reputation [especially] music, drama and art. [At] first sight [I thought] this looks disorganised, but it is more natural, adult ..." (PAU/INT.005, p. 2, 1994).

"[Others see] a very relaxed atmosphere [which] seems unusual. It has no exams until Year 10 trying not to measure pupils against each other. They expect it to be a shambles [with] no rules" (PAU/INT.006, p. 2, 1994).

The headteacher recognises the existence of criticism, particularly from clerics, that St. Paul's does not nurture Catholic faith. In defence of the school he argues that there is no

evidence to support such a belief but acknowledges that reasons for the perception may lie with inadequacies in the school marketing strategy and:

"... our inability to get across what we were doing or we got it across and that it is not acceptable to some people or that because we are not seen to be a particular type of Catholic school" (PAU/INT.001, para. 351-58, 1994).

A similar view is expressed by his key appraiser, a fellow Catholic headteacher, (PAU/DOC.011, 1994). However, none of the teachers whom I interviewed referred to the school's Catholic status as a marketable feature. In the vast majority of cases, they suggested that St. Paul's ethos was the major attraction for parents which, they made clear, they did not feel was specifically Catholic, but more concerned with either relationships between staff and pupils, the style of teaching, a wide curriculum choice or the small group sizes. Their view had support from governors who believed parents chose St. Paul's for its small group sizes and teaching methods rather than for religious reasons (PAU/FLD.045, 1996). In contrast, the headteacher believed that the ethos statement was a clear statement of his philosophy of Catholic education.

Effective Catholic Schools - Academic and Religious Outcomes

Introduction

Assessing the effectiveness of Catholic education rises the question of the purpose. The Vatican view is that, Catholic schools should, in addition to other educational aims, evangelise through systematic catechesis and provide a means of Catholic socialisation (Garrone, para. 59, 1977). This implies that their academic standards are as high as other non-Catholic institutions operating in similar social and geographic circumstances and also places where knowledge of Catholicism is not just taught but where its values are actively lived (Garrone, paras. 29, 32, 53, 1977) and, hopefully, embraced by all those within the community.

Religious Formation

A responsibility for the spiritual and moral development of pupils is recognised both by the Catholic Church (Gravissimum Educationis, 1965) and by the state (Education Act 1944, Section 7; Education Act 1988, Section 1 (2)). It is one of the areas of school life inspected by the government and diocesan inspectors of schools under the provisions of the Education Act 1992. A recent OFSTED inspection of the functioning of St. Peter's as a Catholic school reported:

"There are clear aims, a mission statement, and policies for spiritual and moral development which strongly reflect the Roman Catholic nature of the school. ... the school ensures that the spiritual and moral growth of pupils is well catered for, particularly those aspects which are about personal growth within a faith community" (Section 9 inspection report), (PET/DOC.008, para. 37, 1995).

"St Peter's is a good Catholic school"

(Section 13 inspection report), (PET/DOC.005, p. 1, 1995).

"The spiritual formation of pupils is integral to the life of the school and extends beyond the school gates. Members of the R. E. department were instrumental in establishing a prayer group in the local parish. During the inspection there was evidence of regular prayer in assemblies, R.E. lessons and a programme of residential retreats" (Section 13 inspection report), (PET/DOC.005, p. 23, 1995).

"In 1994 the proportion of pupils achieving [grades] A - C in R.E. was above the national average" (Section 13 inspection report), (PET/DOC.005, p.18, 1995).

"Last year 9.2% of the year group began 'A' level R.E. compared with 0.7% in 1985. This is highly commended"

(Section 13 inspection report), (PET/DOC.005, p. 19, 1995).

The same registered inspector of the Section 13 inspection team was asked to undertake a pre-OFSTED survey of the quality and provision of religious education and collective worship in St. Paul's shortly after completing the St. Peter's inspection. He expressed great concern about the lack of provision for the pupils' spiritual development (PAU/ARC.014, p. 9, 1995), and indicated that, if the survey had been an official inspection, St. Paul's would be regarded as 'a failing school' in respect of its Catholic purpose (PAU/FLD.030, 1995). The private report to the governors makes a number of observations pointing to deficiencies in the religious curriculum content and practices.

"Allocating five percent of curriculum time to R.E., half that suggested by diocesan and national episcopal guidelines" (PAU/ARC.014, p. 2, 1995).

"... little evidence of continuity in learning between key stages" (PAU/ARC.014, p. 3, 1995).

"... the demeanour of pupils militated against effective learning" (PAU/ARC.014, p. 4, 1995).

"... the department commits itself to conducting theology classes in a spirit which helps students to continue their pilgrimage of faith long after they have left us. ... There is little overt encouragement for pupils to continue their pilgrimage of faith in the classroom" (PAU/ARC.014, pp. 3-4, 1995).

"At present, the department is failing in its Key Stage three provision" (PAU/ARC.014, p. 4, 1995).

"... the department needs to review its record-keeping and procedures for assessment ... [and] issue exercise books to ... enable pupils to collate their notes, evaluate their work and make connections with other topics" (PAU/ARC.014, pp. 4-5, 1995).

"... there was little evidence that it [the printed scheme of work] was followed in a systematic manner" (PAU/ARC.014, p. 5, 1995).

"... the need for the speedy appointment of an experienced head of department" (PAU/ARC.014, p. 5, 1995).

"The quality of learning in theology was not commensurate with pupil's achievements in other curriculum areas in Key Stages three and four" (PAU/ARC.014, p. 8, 1995).

"... the requirements of the 1988 Act concerning daily collective worship are not fulfilled ... there is no regular provision for prayer in the school ... it is hard to conceive of a Catholic school where corporate prayer is not a regular feature of school life" (PAU/ARC.014, p. 3, 1995).

In the light of statements by the Catholic Church that a Catholic school *must* impart the faith explicitly and systematically (Garrone, 1977, para 50) and, that it would not deserve the title Catholic if there were proper grounds for "a reproach of negligence or deviation in religious education" (Baum, 1988, para. 66), the comments above suggest that St. Paul's is in danger of failing to fulfil its Catholic purpose as perceived by the Church. The contrast between the quantity and quality of provision in the two schools noted by the inspector is stark, though both see their task as providing a Catholic education within a Catholic environment where their pupils can develop into mature adults and both have made decisions to achieve the religious formation expected by the Church.

Integral to the concept of Catholic socialisation is the expectation that a successful outcome will be personal adherence to that faith in later adult life within the structure of the Catholic church. Both schools acknowledge that hope as a primary purpose of their endeavours and both use religious adherence and career choices of past pupils as one indicator of school success in this area. However, it is clear by definition, that a much longer time scale is necessary to evaluate fully the effectiveness of their efforts which is beyond the scope of this study. Bearing in mind that caveat, some indications are available.

In support of his claim to have been successful in developing positive attitudes to Catholicism among pupils, the first headteacher of St. Paul's cites "two [former students] started training for the priesthood as I retired [in 1998]", (PAU/PER.001, para. 69, 1993). However, the Diocesan vocations director was unable to confirm the accuracy of the claim or that any ordained priest in the diocese had attended St. Paul's school. In comparison, three former St. Peter's pupils have been ordained since 1986, a fourth, having tested his vocation, left the seminary before taking orders and a fifth is a lay missionary working in central America. Governors of both schools used religious vocations as performance indicators in their discussions with me, though in contrasting ways. The St. Paul's chairman, when questioned directly on the matter, regretted that there were no former pupils who had become priests and, to his knowledge, no requests made by non-Catholic pupils to be baptised into the Catholic faith (PAU/INT.007, p. 4, 1995). On the other hand, St. Peter's chairman of governors was particularly proud of the number of priestly vocations and conversions to Catholicism and pointed to them without any prompting from me (PET/INT.002, p. 5, 1994).

Pupils' Academic Achievements

Although the case studies are concerned only with St. Peter's and St. Paul's, a comparison

of their examination results needs to be set against the background of all the comprehensive schools included in the sample analysed in chapter 4. In other words, they should not be compared directly but against pupil performance in the 'average' school. The current national gender bias in levels of academic achievement, with girls achieving higher grades on average than boys, is confirmed by the overall pattern of results in the comprehensive schools in Loamshire shown in table XIII.

Table XIII

PUPIL GCSE SCORE BY SOCIAL STATUS & ABILITY
COUNTY AVERAGE - ALL PUPILS
n = 2335: m = 1170, f = 1165

	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
1	6	10	13	15	21	26	37	39	32	41
2	11	15	19	20	28	33	36	41	49	49
3	10	20	23	26	33	38	43	46	49	55
4	16	29	27	18	39	40	43	47	47	56
	1		2		3		4		5	
	NON-VERBAL REASONING									

The difference, in favour of girls, in eighteen of the twenty sub-groups defined by intellectual ability and socio-economic background, varies between one and thirteen points, averaging just over five, the equivalent of one GCSE grade C pass. The pupils' examination results at St. Peter's shown in table XIV (i) follow a similar pattern with girls out-performing boys. Overall, they achieve at least one GCSE grade C passes more than the county average, with the majority of girls, and some boys, achieving the equivalent of two or more GCSE grade C passes above the county norms. In contrast, table XIV (ii) shows St. Paul's having a markedly different achievement profile to the county average. In five of the ten sub-groups where direct comparisons could be made, boys achieved better results than their female counterparts, though their superiority was confined to those who

Table XIV (i)

PUPIL GCSE AVERAGE SCORE BY SOCIAL STATUS & ABILITY

St. PETER'S n = 133: m = 77, f = 56

COUNTY n = 2335: m = 1170, f = 1165

		M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
U		n/a	13	20	38	27	33	60	49	n/a	51
U	1	6	10	13	15	21	26	37	39	32	41
U		n/a	n/a	24	21	35	43	47	55	52	64
U	2	11	15	19	20	28	33	36	41	49	49
U		n/a	n/a	14	n/a	45	48	48	52	51	59
U	3	10	20	23	26	33	38	43	46	49	55
U		n/a	n/a	n/a	32	36	38	50	57	n/a	n/a
U	4	16	29	27	18	39	40	43	47	47	56
		1		2		3		4		5	
NON-VERBAL REASONING											

Table XIV (ii)

St. PAUL'S n = 145: m = 77, f = 68

COUNTY n = 2335: m = 1170, f = 1165

		M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
U		n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	4	39	n/a	n/a	n/a
U	1	6	10	13	15	21	26	37	39	32	41
U		n/a	n/a	14	5	22	15	28	23	40	n/a
U	2	11	15	19	20	28	33	36	41	49	49
U		n/a	n/a	25	6	32	36	39	40	48	54
U	3	10	20	23	26	33	38	43	46	49	55
U		n/a	n/a	25	n/a	36	33	39	49	41	52
U	4	16	29	27	18	39	40	43	47	47	56
		1		2		3		4		5	
NON-VERBAL REASONING											

were in the lower ability socio-economic sub-groups. Overall, the results in table XIV (ii) illustrate how, in all sub-group, girls attending St. Paul's performed very poorly in GCSE examinations compared to the county average, particularly those of lower ability and socio-economic background who obtained the equivalent of three GCSE grade C passes less than similar pupils elsewhere. The differential is still evident, but not so great, in the more advantaged sub-groups. The performance of boys was nearer to the county average. There were thirteen cases where comparisons could be made. In two, St. Paul's male pupils were two points above the county average, in seven within five points below the

average, and in the remaining two more than eight points below. The overall pattern of achievement can be seen in the aggregated score given in table XV.

Table XV

PUPILS AVERAGE GCSE SCORE BY SOCIAL STATUS				
ST. PAUL'S +/- COUNTY AVERAGE				
		St.PAUL'S	n = 145: m =77, f = 68	
		COUNTY	n = 2335: m = 1170, f = 1165	
BOYS	2.0	-7.0	-1.0	-3.8
GIRLS	-22.0	-16.6	-7.3	-4.3
		1	2	3
SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS				

While it appears that the culture of St. Paul's is particularly ineffective in helping girls achieve examination success, especially those with lower socio-economic status, it is not clear why it should be so, or why the pattern of achievement at St. Paul's should differ so noticeably from both the national and local trends.

Table XVI

PUPILS AVERAGE GCSE SCORE BY SOCIAL STATUS				
ST. PETER'S +/- COUNTY AVERAGE				
		St.PETER'S	n = 133: m =77, f = 56	
		COUNTY	n = 2335: m = 1170, f = 1165	
BOYS	12.0	6.5	2.5	2.0
GIRLS	10.6	10.0	7.3	7.3
		1	2	3
SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS				

In comparison, it is the socially disadvantaged pupils that seem to gain most from attending St. Peter's. This suggests that its culture is going some way towards reducing the negative effects of low social status. The findings are seen both in the aggregated data in table XVI above and in the individual sub-groups in tables XVII (i) and XVII (ii).

Table XVII (i)

ST. PETER'S +/- COUNTY AVERAGE					
GIRLS GCSE SCORE BY SOCIAL STATUS & ABILITY					
		St. PETER'S		n = 56	
		COUNTY		n = 1165	
S O C I O E C O N O M I C	1	3	23	7	10
	2	n/a	1	10	14
	3	n/a	n/a	10	8
	4	n/a	14	-2	10
		1	2	3	4
NON-VERBAL REASONING					

Table XVII (ii)

ST. PETER'S +/- COUNTY AVERAGE					
BOYS GCSE SCORE BY SOCIAL STATUS & ABILITY					
		St. PETER'S		n = 77	
		COUNTY		n = 1170	
S O C I O E C O N O M I C	1	n/a	17	6	23
	2	n/a	5	7	11
	3	n/a	-9	12	5
	4	n/a	n/a	-3	7
		1	2	3	4
NON-VERBAL REASONING					

Summary

In this chapter, I have compared and contrasted the religious and academic outcomes of two Catholic schools. In doing so I was concerned with their effectiveness in achieving specific objectives, not with an assessment of their educational value nor with a philosophical justification as to the means employed. I have considered school policy decisions which contribute specifically to the development of a sense of community, to the

school culture and its social cohesion, which I regard as the main determinants in achieving those outcomes, setting them within their respective historical and geographical contexts.

The policies and practices adopted by St. Peter's have proved effective in helping its pupils achieve examination grades significantly above those of similar pupils attending the 'average' school in the sample and in developing a positive attitude in towards the Catholic faith. In contrast, St. Paul's approach seems ineffective on both measures.

The quality of pupil-teacher relationships are important aspects of the culture of the two schools. In practice both achieve a climate within which relationships are personally harmonious and supportive of pupils. They are both caring places in which pupils are happy. The schools' interpretations of their academic and religious tasks, however, leads to different forms of policy implementation and outcomes. Such items as pedagogical methods, curriculum structure and organisation, academic emphasis, approach to school discipline, admission policies, understanding of Catholic education and the role of Catholic schools vis-a-vis parents in the process of socialisation are all different.

Both schools claim Catholic status and to share the same ostensible purpose. They have made a similar analysis of the tasks confronting Catholic schools in current times. However, they do not share similar cultures and have developed into distinctly differing school communities. St. Peter's has set out to become as near to a faith community as possible and seeks to reinforce and develop a Catholic cultural identity. Religious education and activities occupy a central role in school life. There is an emphasis on academic achievement in the school structure and organisation. In its general approach it is fairly typical of the usual and traditional model of Catholic secondary school, aiming to meet the perceived needs of the Catholic faith community. As such, it is supported by

parents, including non-Catholics, and the parish communities that it serves. It is effective in achieving high academic performances from pupils of all abilities, well above that which might be expected given their measured intelligence and social background, and appears to help pupils narrow the achievement gap between the lower and higher social groups. It is also relatively effective in achieving the religious goals of Catholic socialisation and adherence to religious practices, at least while the pupils are attending school. Pupils accept the school culture, disciplinary problems are minor in character and pupil exclusions are extremely low in comparison with other schools in the same local authority.

In direct contrast, St. Paul's has attempted to develop a new approach to Catholic education, which is described as an ecumenical nursery. This concept has its roots in the Church of England understanding of the role of Church schools. It has not been so effective in achieving the goals that the two schools share. It is particularly ineffective academically, remarkably so with girls, whose achievements run counter to national and local trends. The quality of the religious education does not meet the minimum standards expected by Catholic authorities and there is little evidence that its approach encourages active involvement or interest in religious matters by the pupils while they are attending school.

St. Paul's was established around and sustained by the extremely dominant personality of its charismatic headteacher during the first twenty years of its existence. In that period it isolated itself, to a great extent, from the local authority, the diocese of which it should have been a part and the local Church community. It operated a form of covert selection in its admissions procedure in favour of wealthy middle class and intelligent children.

Significant numbers of Catholic families in its catchment area chose to send their children elsewhere. In response to externally generated educational changes and pressures from the

diocesan authorities it developed a siege mentality, attempting to insulate itself from increasingly intrusive government legislation.

With the retirement of the headteacher a leadership crisis developed within St. Paul's and factional disputes arose in the governing body over the appointment of his successor. The new headteacher has dealt with the resultant instability using a moderate leadership style in response to the diverse needs of staff groups, governor factions and the diocese. He has not been able to completely satisfy any of the conflicting group demands and, as the financial constraints imposed by a tightening budget on the expensive education system adopted by the school have become more pressing, the factional bickering has increased. His educational vision is of an ecumenical nursery. The inherent tensions between faithful transmission of the Catholic faith and openness to other religious beliefs and to the values of those with no religious convictions have not been resolved during his tenure.

The tensions of the model are exacerbated by the fragility of the school community. Its major binding force having been the personality of the first headteacher. Without his unifying influence, open divisions have multiplied within an essentially unstable situation. The ecumenical nursery model has failed to attract much more than half the potential Catholic population. It does not generate any consensus in religious or moral values among the staff that are acceptable to many of the governors and the Catholic hierarchy. Consequently, the potential for conflict and instability remains.

One aspect of its philosophy which is accepted by all is the caring relationship between staff and pupils. However, this aim is interpreted in such a variety of ways that there is little structural cohesion within the school management and organisation or agreement on specific educational or religious objectives that should derive from its concern. An emphasis on personal autonomy within a highly regulated and compulsory system of

education has also created tensions and contradictions. Pupils and LEA officers imply that the approach taken by St. Paul's allows pupils to achieve less than their academic potential if that is their choice, and that it is only appropriate for a specific kind of highly self-motivated, intellectually able child. There is deviant behaviour by significant numbers of pupils leading to their exclusion from school. It is possible that a cause of such behaviour arises from a failure of the school culture to meet the needs of an large number of its now comprehensive intake.

The academic ineffectiveness of St. Paul's, deficiencies in its process of Catholic socialisation and its failure to generate management coherence capable of supporting high levels of academic achievement stem from two main sources, the first religious and therefore particular to St. Paul's, the second managerial, with implications for any school.

They are:

- *the inherent tensions in the ecumenical model that have not been resolved to the complete satisfaction of the main stakeholders so that there is no generally accepted clarity or uniformity of religious purpose within the school.*
- *a lack of clarity about the organisational structure leading to ineffective management and cohesion in the processes of teaching and learning.*

St. Peter's effectiveness also stems from two main sources:

- *the establishment of an educational and religious vision for the school that matched the aspirations of the majority of stakeholders.*
- *a clear management structure designed to achieve the school's agreed and accepted aims.*

Headteacher Perspectives - A Postscript

It is, perhaps, interesting to note I left St Peter's convinced that during my tenure the school had not developed into the active religious community I had envisaged. In addition, despite my subsequent findings, I did not believe we had been able to establish a standard of academic achievement which was commensurate with the abilities of the pupils. Overall, I felt that I had failed in the leadership task I had set myself. The headteacher of St. Paul's,

on the other hand, has now left believing that, though people had expected and predicted his failure, he could claim some success for leaving behind a school in a better condition than that which he inherited (PAU/INT.001, para. 696-708). I think he is correct.

CHAPTER 8

MODELS OF EFFECTIVENESS:

A SUMMARY OF THE MAIN RESEARCH FINDINGS

Introduction

There has been very little research in England specifically focused on the relative academic effectiveness of Catholic and county schools. In undertaking this study my purpose is to increase the knowledge base about the academic performance of Catholic comprehensive schools which, though it has been noted in a number of studies, has not been the prime concern of researchers in this country. At the outset of my research, the available data led me to expect that I would find the Catholic schools in my sample taken from one shire county to be among the most academically effective, in the sense that their pupils would achieve GCSE examination results higher than the average of similar pupils attending similar schools.

My main interest is to consider factors relating to the religious nature of Catholic schools that may contribute to their hypothesised superior academic productivity. My findings indicate that alternative interpretations of the style and purpose of Catholic education in two differing Catholic schools are associated with their levels of academic performance. However, the history of the particularly ineffective Catholic school, while arising in part from its view of Catholic education, suggests that there are other factors inhibiting its pupils academic achievement that are only tenuously linked to Catholicism and could be features of ineffective secular schools.

Academic Effectiveness and Catholic Schools

I found one of the two Catholic comprehensive schools to be the most academically effective of all those included in the sample surveyed when measures of pupil ability and

socio-economic status were taken into account. The other, in unexpected contrast, was the least effective, though their published raw examination based on the government's published benchmarks of success were almost identical. My subsequent case studies of the two Catholic schools show that they have different values, attitudes and practices arising from, and built upon, their individual understanding of the religious purpose of Catholic education and, therefore, their chosen educational aims.

This understanding influences patterns of pupil intake, underlies the emphasis each school places on pupils' academic achievement, determines the nature of teacher-pupil relationships, the organisational structure they adopt, their styles of leadership and the manner in which governors and the headteacher exercise control. The different views affect the patterns of religious affiliation within the school community as well as the expectations that various stakeholders have about the future direction each school should take.

My initial investigation uses quantitative techniques to show different levels of academic effectiveness but the methodology, which can be replicated, does not allow causal relationships to be established. The case studies illuminate the similarities and differences of the two schools, but are only suggestive of the possible causal relationship between their different levels of academic effectiveness and the values, attitudes and practices they espouse.

Patterns of Academic Achievement

The overall levels of academic achievement across the whole sample of comprehensive schools in the shire county forming the basis of this study show a consistent pattern. Pupils' GCSE points score are directly related to their intellectual ability and socio-

economic home background. The overall pattern holds true irrespective of gender and is evident in both the Catholic schools surveyed.

St. Peter's, the most academically successful school in the sample, is particularly effective with the more socially disadvantaged pupils compared to the county average. Girls in the lowest social group score, on average, ten points more than the county mean with boys twelve points ahead. Though the average scores of both sexes in each of the four socio-economic groups is higher than the county average, its magnitude is inversely related to the pupils' social background.

The current national gender bias in levels of academic achievement, with girls achieving higher grades on average than boys, is also confirmed by the pattern of results across the whole sample. My findings show the difference, in favour of girls, is in eighteen of the twenty sub-groups defined by intellectual ability and socio-economic background. It varies between one and thirteen points, averaging just over five, the equivalent of one GCSE grade C pass. In one of the two remaining cases there is no difference in average score and in the other, boys in the highest socio-economic/second lowest ability group, score on average, nine points higher than their female counterparts.

St. Peter's has a similar overall pattern in achievement levels as the larger sample with girls achieving a higher average points score in eleven of the twelve sub-groups where comparisons are possible. Overall, pupils attending the school achieve the equivalent, on average, of at least one GCSE grade C pass more than the county average. The majority of girls, and a minority of boys, achieve the equivalent of two or more GCSE grade C passes above the county norms. The least effective school, St. Paul's, the other Catholic school in the sample, has a markedly different achievement profile to that of the county pattern. Boys perform better than girls in five of the ten cases where direct within-school

comparisons can be made. The boys superior performance at St. Paul's tends to be by those in the lower ability and socio-economic sub-groups.

Organisational Structure, Academic Emphasis and Pedagogical Style

High levels of academic effectiveness are found at St. Peter's. It gives a high priority to clearly defined academic aims and has an organisational structure designed to achieve them based on the Catholic principle of subsidiarity. It has high academic expectations of all its pupils, assuming that they complete and are examined in the examination courses they undertake. They all follow a similar academically oriented curriculum pre-determined by teachers with limited choice. A very small range of non-examination courses are internally assessed and certificated. Teaching is geared towards the examination success, and teachers are expected to take primary responsibility for the pupils' examination achievements or failure.

Table XVIII

CATHOLIC SCHOOLS AND ACADEMIC EFFECTIVENESS ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE

THE EFFECTIVE SCHOOL	THE INEFFECTIVE SCHOOL
separates the role of policy making from management implementation	blurs policy making and implementation roles
has clearly defined and delineated management roles	has indistinct and overlapping management responsibilities
has strong directional leadership	aims for consensual leadership
devolves maximum power within clearly defined corporate policies	has few corporate policies or agreed systems of management control
has clear lines of management responsibility and accountability	is unclear where power and responsibility lies
keeps to its budget	has little budgetary control
has no separation of teaching and disciplinary responsibilities	separates discipline from teaching

Low levels of academic effectiveness are found at St. Paul's. The school gives high priority to the quality of personal relationships, striving to avoid criticism of pupils by teachers which might undermine their self confidence. It encourages teacher participation in collaborative decision making but has no clearly defined organisational structure to translate collaboration and involvement in policy discussions into corporate action. It has no defined aims or objectives and the division of responsibilities for decision making is unclear. A strong emphasis on the value of the individual produces a dominant school ethic in favour of personal choice, individual freedom and the intellectual autonomy of

Table XIX

CATHOLIC SCHOOLS AND ACADEMIC EFFECTIVENESS
TEACHING METHODS

defines its academic aims and objectives	has no stated academic aims
emphasises academic achievement for all through a common curriculum with a minimum of pupil choice	emphasises the unique value of each pupil by encouraging personal choice from the widest possible curriculum
offers few non-examination courses	offers many non-examination courses
has high academic expectations of all pupils placing demands on them to take ten examination courses	make pupils increasingly responsible for their own pace and degree of learning on a maximum of eight courses
encourages teachers to use a variety of appropriate teaching styles to maximise pupil academic achievement	emphasises one teaching style for all pupils
gives pupil achievement priority over teaching process	gives the process of teaching and learning priority over pupil achievement
monitors, assesses and reports pupil progress regularly	does little marking or formal assessment of pupil progress before Year 10
aims for all pupils obtaining at least one examination success	has no agreed examination targets for pupils
holds teachers responsible for pupil examination successes and failures	holds pupils responsible for their own learning and levels of achievement

both staff and pupils. This militates against corporate decision making and responsibility. The school's emphasis on personal autonomy inhibits the realisation of pupils' academic

potential, allowing, or tolerating, pupil under-achievement. Responsibility for academic success or failure is, primarily, laid on pupils not the teachers. Formal monitoring and systematic reporting of pupil progress is limited, particularly so before the start of GCSE examination courses in Year 10.

Historic Influences and Perspectives

The marked differences that I noted are not the result of random chance, but arise out of conscious decisions made during the two schools respective histories. In the same way current decision making is also a product of their past and present circumstances.

During the period covered by the study, and in particular the year to which the analysis of examination results pertains, St Peter's can be characterised as a well established institution at a time of metaphorical peace and prosperity. Under such circumstances it is able to concentrate on fostering growth and work towards the fulfilment of fundamental purposes agreed and accepted by all its stakeholders. There is a high degree of congruence between the values and expectations of parents and those of the school and its leadership.

St. Paul's, under its first headteacher, set itself apart from the diocese and local education authority. Its primary reference point was the headteacher and his idiosyncratic interpretation of Catholic education, rather than that of the Ordinary of the diocese and his department of religious education. He rejected the central concept of Catholic formation as the schools' primary purpose and also traditional Catholic ritual and doctrinal teaching, establishing in their place a highly personal vision of Catholic education based primarily on his interpretation of Vatican documents concerned with religious freedom. His leadership style is variously described as visionary, autocratic and despotic. His vision and practices polarised Catholic parents living in the school's catchment area but was popular with many middle-class non-Catholics. The school was sustained by his extremely charismatic and

powerful personality and his ability to operate almost in isolation from the Catholic and educational communities in which St. Paul's was located. It had many of the characteristics of a private school albeit publicly financed.

His retirement coincided with significant changes in the national educational system which removed much of the traditional academic and organisational freedoms enjoyed by schools. St. Paul's is trying to come to terms with the massive conforming and centralising tendencies of government legislation from 1988 onwards, which brought in its wake constraints and a style of accountability entirely foreign to its existing character. Because the school is so much the creation of the unique character of its first headteacher, his retirement, reinforced by the macro-educational policy changes of central government, precipitated an identity crisis for the school. It is facing a time of severe strain in which its original identity and style can not be sustained.

Religious Purpose of a Catholic School: Two Models

In England and Wales the normal, and traditional, expectation has been for Catholic schools to be places to which baptised Catholic children are sent by their parents to be taught the Catholic faith by Catholic staff. Both schools have recognised and responded to the changing social circumstances of Britain since the 1950s as a post-Christian society has developed, though their responses differ markedly. Like the majority of Catholic secondary schools in England, both have a significant number of teaching staff who are not baptised Catholics.

In response to current social conditions St. Peter's has emphasised its role as a Catholic community with the prime purpose of nurturing Catholic children in a faith that is open to others. Some non-Catholic pupils are admitted, the majority of whom have attended Catholic primary schools and come from active Christian families. They are as fully

integrated as possible into the Catholic life of the school. The majority of non-Catholic teaching staff are also active Christians, expected to support Catholic teaching, values and practices. The school provides help, advice and some training to enable non-Catholic staff to meet the obligations placed upon them. It aims to be a school for Catholic pupils, only admitting non-Catholics in small numbers because it has spare capacity and then on the basis that, as a percentage of the total school population, they are unlikely to adversely affect the Catholic character of the school as a faith community.

Its understanding of its mission leads to policies that aim to integrate faith and culture. It makes communal worship, religious practices and the teaching of Catholic faith and beliefs, using Diocesan approved syllabi, a central element of school life for all pupils. The dominant model is of a 'top down' process, in which the school tries to meet its understanding of the needs of its mainly Catholic pupils by offering an education which is a synthesis between culture and Catholic faith. The implementation of this model, which requires, at least, a core community of believers who bring to all school activities the light of their faith in Christ, emphasises Catholic socialisation with its associated evangelisation, catechetical and, inevitably, some missionary activity. It is attractive both to the Catholic community and others who want, or, at the very least, accept, their children receiving explicit instruction in the tenets of the Catholic faith. GCSE religious studies is a successful examination course at the school and an increasing number of pupils choose to take the subject at 'A' level and at university. A number of non-Catholic pupils have chosen to enter the Church and three former pupils have been ordained as Catholic priests.

St. Paul's stresses the importance of its religious mission by emphasising the freedom of individuals to accept or reject opportunities for religious activities. It has adopted a model of religious pluralism. The possibility of a religious life in school is offered to staff and pupils, but it is for the individual to choose to respond to it rather than a collective way of

life into which they are expected to be assimilated. There is no corporate prayer, adoration or sacramental life, but a desire that members of the school will choose to join in the religious activities that take place. There are both Church of England and Catholic chaplains appointed to work in the school.

In the quest to ensure openness towards those of other denominations and faiths, great pains are taken to ensure that the religious, or non-religious sensibilities of staff and pupils are not offended by overt manifestations of a specifically Catholic nature. There are few religious icons. The timetable allocation for religious education is below the diocesan recommended minimum. Religious teaching is only loosely based on diocesan guidelines tending to be non-denominational and non-dogmatic. An individualistic pedagogical approach predominates in which personal responses of pupils to issues are sought and a non-judgmental stance adopted by teachers. The approach can be characterised as a 'bottom up' model in which the school emphasises its role in responding to the interests and desires of the pupils. Such an approach generates inherent and inescapable tensions when practised within a compulsory system of education with a prescribed National Curriculum and in the name of a dogmatic Church. It is particularly unpopular with foundation governors and Catholic clergy, especially those directly connected with the school. They believe it encourages religious syncretism, moral relativism and militates against the development of any desire among pupils for knowledge of, or commitment to, the orthodox teaching of a revealed religion by a hierarchical Church. Unlike St. Peter's pupils, there is no demand to take religious studies courses at GCSE or 'A' level.

Community and Social Cohesion

The complex concept of community is currently used to describe both a physical grouping and, in some circumstances, the sense of commonly held values, attitudes and practices of particular people without, necessarily, implying close physical proximity. The normal and

traditional model of Catholic school aims to be a community in both senses. It caters primarily for Catholics, a sub-cultural grouping in society, which is likely to be geographically more scattered than the majority population attending maintained secondary schools, especially those located in urban or semi-urban areas.

St. Peter's school closely represents the traditional model. It attracts the vast majority of its natural constituents in the local Catholic population, irrespective of their social background, and all those involved directly in the school, whether Catholic or not,

Table XX

CATHOLIC SCHOOLS AND ACADEMIC EFFECTIVENESS
SCHOOL COMMUNITY AND SOCIAL COHESION

THE EFFECTIVE SCHOOL	THE INEFFECTIVE SCHOOL
has a predominantly Catholic roll	has a minority Catholic intake
has high religious homogeny	welcome religious diversity
has the full support of the local Catholic community	has ambivalent local Catholic support
is part of the family of Catholic schools	is isolated from other Catholic schools
emphasises Catholic socialisation and religious integration	emphasises common human values and religious ecumenism
sees Catholic education as formation in the Catholic faith	sees Catholic education as promoting religious autonomy and freedom
teaches Catholic doctrine and practices a corporate religious life	regards religious teaching as free enquiry and personal response
teaches moral absolutism	accepts moral relativism

subscribe in varying degrees of commitment and understanding to the same view of its stated primary purpose. Its intake is socially representative of that part of the county in which it is located having the broadest social mix of all the secondary schools in the area. There is no selection, overt or covert, based on intellectual or social criteria. It sees itself as part of a collaborative and corporate system, as one of the family of schools serving the

needs of the Catholic community as part of the mission of the wider Catholic Church under the control and direction of the Ordinary of the diocese. Its regards its primary purpose to be a support to Catholic parents providing pupils with a knowledge and understanding of Catholic faith and moral teaching within a context where Catholic rituals are practised on a day to day basis.

Pupils attending St. Peter's see it as having a have a sense of corporate identity and common religious purpose. They show concern and care for each other and the wider school community. The school buildings are not vandalised and there is a very low incidence of pupil exclusion from the school compared to the average in the area of the county that it serves.

For many years the pupil population of St. Paul's was unrepresentative of the area it served both intellectually and socially. Pupils were actively recruited from the higher social groupings in the area. At the time of the study covert selection no longer takes place, but working class pupils are still under represented. There is a wide range of disparate religious and non-religious attitudes and backgrounds among pupils in the school of which baptised Catholics form slightly less than half the pupil body. A large minority of its potential Catholic intake are sent to schools elsewhere in the county by their parents. In the period since 1988 it has not established a new unifying force or ideology in respect of its Catholic educative purpose that is generally accepted by, or acceptable to, the majority of Catholic stakeholders.

While there is a school community, in the sense of a physical grouping of people, its major common factor is attendance at St. Paul's. There are no generally agreed approach to religious socialisation or agreed primary purpose for the school. Such lack of agreement, coupled with an emphasis on personal autonomy, encourages individualism in staff and

produces a climate of moral and social relativism among pupils. In other words, there is little evidence of community at St. Paul's in the second sense of the concept outlined above.

Table XXI

CATHOLIC SCHOOLS AND ACADEMIC EFFECTIVENESS
SCHOOL COMMUNITY - PUPIL CHARACTERISTICS

THE EFFECTIVE SCHOOL	THE INEFFECTIVE SCHOOL
pupils have a wide spread of intellectual ability	pupils have a restricted range of ability
pupils are socially mixed	pupils come from a restricted socio-economic background
pupils accept and conform to the set behavioural standards and there are few pupil exclusion	pupil exclusions are at a high level
pupils are self confident, open and welcoming	pupils are self confident, arrogant and often remote
pupils show mutual peer respect and support	pupils display poor interpersonal peer relationships
pupils display a corporate culture	pupils value individual freedom of choice

While the majority of pupils identify with the school community, the pattern and number of pupil exclusions over a period of years are regarded as higher than average by the local education authority though they are very close to the national average. Figures for 1991-92 show they are approximately ten times higher than at St. Peter's as a proportion of their relative school population. Numerically, St. Paul's exclude more than eighteen times the number of pupils than St. Peter's.

At this moment in St. Paul's history, alternative and incompatible views of its future role are supported and promoted by different stakeholders. The school can be regarded as being in a state of crisis, exacerbated by budgetary constraints linked to its preferred and traditional pedagogical approach, that has yet to be resolved with an agreed definition of

its primary purpose and its long-term development. The headteacher's concepts of the school as an 'ecumenical nursery' and its purpose to 'hold diversity in unity' have been clearly articulated, but such ideas, with their appropriate aims and objectives, do not find general acceptance among governors, staff or parents nor has an agreed method been established by which such a concept might be realised.

Trust and Control: Leadership Patterns

In its 'time of crisis', a number of conflicting and irreconcilable perceptions of the needs of St. Paul's are evident. The resultant inherent tensions are evident in responses to the external threats to its pre-1988 identity. There are conflicting, and irreconcilable, demands to lead the school towards the traditional holistic model of Catholic school as a faith community (like St. Peter's) and to remain as it was, retaining its distinctive, pluralistic and separate identity, despite the different personality of the new headteacher, the constraints of the National Curriculum and limited financial resources.

The school is a maelstrom of conflicting pressures and demands. Its headteacher believes the most important priority for the school is a change in the style of leadership exercised by staff, which he regards as central to the building of his vision of a Christian community. The majority of staff and governors do not have the same priority, but neither do they agree on what is the most pressing need. The headteacher has responded to the conflicting demands by being open, to some degree, to all perceived needs so that he does not threaten excessively any one of the various groupings that have a legitimate interest in the school's development. Almost inevitably, he does not meet the aspirations, or fulfil the expectations, of a majority of the stakeholders at any one time.

Governors are unclear of their role and how to exercise their responsibilities. They are unable to achieve that balance between their role in determining policy and trusting the

headteacher to implement it which enables them both to carry out their respective leadership roles effectively. Consequently, clear policies in critical areas are confused or non-existent and the delineation between policy and implementation is unclear. Systems to control teaching staff and mechanisms to ensure accountability for their performance are inadequate. Teaching staff, feeling under threat, are defensive, anxious and distrustful of any perceived changes but they too are divided in their views about the way forward.

St. Peter's, operating in a calmer environment, is more able to meet the external challenges of the changing educational world without unmanageable internal tensions. The headteacher meets the expectations of the majority of stakeholders in the community. He is not expected to be an agent of drastic change except in so far as it is necessary to solve externally presented problems, such as the implementation of the National Curriculum, avoid any decline in the school roll and foster its growth and expansion to meet the demand from the Catholic community. Parents and governors feel the process of Catholic socialisation provided by the school supports their efforts. Consequently, since the general perception is that the major goals are being achieved, the headteacher is allowed to concentrate on controlling the school in his own way and given a large degree of trust by the governors who do not involve themselves in day to day school matters. His role is, largely, to define the aims and objectives of the school, articulate its rules and laws and ensure they are observed. St. Peter's is a united institution; its leadership confident and staff ready to be led. It is at ease with itself and its purpose, able to adapt to the demands of the changing educational world with relative confidence.

Conclusion: Catholic Characteristics Associated with High Academic Effectiveness

Catholic schools have traditionally existed to support parents in their responsibility to educate their children in the Catholic faith. The greater the degree of congruity between the values, attitudes practices and expectations of the school with that of parents the

greater the likelihood of the success of the joint enterprise. The traditional model of Catholic school aims to serve a specific cultural sub-group, or faith community, having common attitudes and values, however unconsciously understood. They have a greater potential for achieving high levels of congruity with parental values and attitudes than schools serving more pluralistic and diverse communities whose main determining feature is physical proximity. In turn, the greater the level of social cohesion between home and school the more likely it is that there will be a high degree of social harmony and of educational purpose within the school community, leading to high levels of academic effectiveness and productivity.

St. Peter's Roman Catholic school is highly effective academically when compared to all other schools in the sample. St. Paul's particularly ineffective. The case studies compares the two Catholic schools. Though the degree to which the findings of case studies can be generalised is problematic, my comparison suggests there are specific Catholic factors arising out of their interpretation and implementation of their Catholic nature and purpose which are associated with levels of academic effectiveness.

Some characteristics are probably equally applicable to non-Catholic schools. My findings confirm some of those reported in studies which have not been concerned with investigating any possible religious dimension to academic effectiveness. However, St. Peter's is highly effective and claims to be using religious principles as the basis for its organisational structure, school processes, values and attitudes with which it intends to achieve that effectiveness. It is legitimate to say that the interpretation of Catholic principles has an influence on the schools respective levels of academic achievement without being able to determine or demonstrate an exact causal relationship.

CHAPTER 9

DIVERSE SOCIETY, DIVERSE SOLUTIONS?

IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY

Introduction

In the 1950s the general view of Catholic schools was that they were probably weak academically though still largely effective in nurturing religious faith. Since the 1960s doubts have been raised about their religious effectiveness while at the same time their general academic performance has improved. In recent years models of Catholic school have developed which have not placed a high priority on the transference of Catholic faith, on evangelisation or catechesis.

There is an increasing amount of evidence suggesting that in the last decade of this century Catholic schools may have become more academically effective than their non-Catholic equivalents. The main purpose of this study has been to consider specific factors relating to the religious nature of Catholic comprehensive schools that may contribute to their superior academic effectiveness. However, not all the contributory factors found in the study are specifically related to Catholicity.

Though the non-religious factors are still relevant, this chapter concentrates mainly on the Catholic issues and the implications of the findings for those charged with the responsibility for planning the future direction of Catholic education within the existing dual educational system of England and Wales to ensure both high quality academic and religious education. Of secondary importance are the implications of the results for the wider educational system in England which seeks to provide effective schools for all pupils

and to meet the aspirations of diverse groups of parents in an increasingly pluralistic society.

There are two main dimensions to the specific difficulties faced by those planning the future of pattern of Catholic schools. The first is the role of Catholic schools in the social circumstances of the new millennium. During recent decades England has become a multi-racial and multi-cultural society in which there are significant numbers of people adhering to faiths other than Christian. However, the most significant change in society is the reduction in the influence of its religious underpinnings as it develops a dominating secular, or non-religious, culture. Consequently, as religious institutions, Catholic schools will be unable, in the foreseeable future, either to assume, or rely upon, the support of a religious society to underpin its educational efforts. Their fundamental religious role now differs quite radically from the prevailing secular view of the purpose education.

The second is the balance that needs to be made between the catechetical and theological role of the Catholic schools (that is the formation of children in faith and helping youngsters seeking understanding of that faith), and the desire to enable children to develop as autonomous beings. There are tensions between the values that demand fidelity in the transmission of Catholic faith and culture and those seeking an openness to other beliefs in the search for (religious) truth. Arriving at an appropriate balance will include making judgements on the appropriate teaching methods to employ and the timing of changes in the chosen approach appropriate for very young children beginning statutory education to that suitable for those entering adulthood at the end of their formal schooling.

Effective Catholic Schools in a Pluralistic Society

The majority of Catholic schools in England will probably remain communities of mainly Catholic children and adults sharing with parents and parish the traditional role of forming

children in the Catholic faith while also being open to others who wish to be involved in that particular religious and educative experience.

The confessional or holistic model of Catholic school exists precisely to unite with the family and parish to provide socialisation into a specific understanding of the world and the purpose of humanity. It is the model portrayed in official Church documents and articulated by the bishops. If it is reinforced by the example of staff and supported by unambiguous liturgical and spiritual activities it provides an environment in which children grow towards adulthood in an environment that enables them to face alternative and non-compatible world views with confidence. It is the traditional view of Catholic education and an ideal shared by many religion peoples.

The clear, agreed and focused mission of the traditional model of Catholic school serving a faith community enables high levels of academic effectiveness to be achieved precisely because it provides the social cement which holds organisations together, makes the notion of a distinctive ethos real rather than rhetorical, and gives an emotional security to pupils in which they can thrive both socially and intellectually. It provides a means for sustaining and developing cultural identity.

School models which, in response to the perceived needs of a pluralistic community, see the development of the specific Catholic vision as excessively prescriptive and damaging to a quest for personal human autonomy, do not provide a supportive environment to enable children to become effectively functional members of any particular cultural or religious group and so militate against the development of a religious cultural identity. Without the feeling of belonging to a group or community in which they can have confidence, children are unlikely to learn from others. Nor are they likely to develop the

necessary abilities to seek out truth if they are taught within a school culture that encourages the view that there are no absolutes and all personal beliefs are equally valid.

The Future Pattern

The development of a pluralistic, multi-faith and mainly secular society requires a re-evaluation of the role of Catholic schools. Education helps shape the life of individual insofar as it conserves, enriches and transmits to succeeding generations the accumulated knowledge, skills, values, beliefs and understanding of a particular society or community. Catholic schools have provided a formal means of Catholic socialisation and encouraged cultural identity. Most are likely to continue to do so, but for a Catholic community that is no longer separated from mainstream society in a ghetto-like existence, as it was in past generations, or in the mainstream of an essentially Christian society, as has been the case in more recent years. It is likely that the Catholic community will be one of many separate and distinct cultural groupings that will cut across current socio-economic categories. In such circumstances, I would argue that, it is most important for the Catholic Church to reinvent the traditional confessional, or holistic, model as the paradigm for its schools which are likely to be staffed and governed almost entirely by the laity rather than religious.

Faith and Non-Belief

The confessional model of school exists to preserve and develop religious cultural identity by presenting faith in God as a way of life because of a belief that it is a true reflection of human reality. If that belief is true, it is of vital importance for everyone. If it is not, it is of little importance other than for the particular adherents. In a pluralist society, while it is necessary to consider the response that must be made to the presence of sizeable communities of peoples of other faiths, Catholic schools cannot have a mission to promote both a religious and a secular view of life since the two are incompatible. Consequently, their purpose needs to be clear and explicit if they are to be effective. Parents will then be

able to recognise the values that the school will promote with their children. If it is not clear, it is unlikely that there will be high levels of congruity of purpose between school and home, or effectiveness in reaching agreed goals, without which high levels of academic achievement are difficult to achieve.

Catholic Schools and Other Faiths

Where Catholic schools are located in areas with large numbers of people of other religious faiths whose children are welcomed as pupils, a clear religious rationale should be established and developed between the diocesan authorities, governors, staff and parents. The doctrinal, liturgical and catechetical assumptions of the confessional model may need to be modified in order to enhance the religious development of all its pupils. Catechetical methods will need to affirm Catholic identity while respecting the faith of others. That complex religious rationale should be clearly expressed firstly in the schools' mission, and then its policies, practices and attitudes must be made compatible with its purpose. There will be a number of tensions: between faithfulness and openness; between proclaiming a way of life and being open to dialogue; between formation in faith and respecting religious freedom. But without such clarity and unity of purpose the school is less likely to realise high levels of effectiveness in any aspect of the school's work, including the pupils' academic achievements

The confessional or holistic model of Catholic school can nurture positive attitudes towards the faith, develop an open and just educational community and contribute towards serving the needs of the local populace. That clarity and unity of purpose, so readily available to such schools, supports and facilitates academic effectiveness. While there may be a need to accept there can be different valid models of Catholic school appropriate to differing social circumstances in England, the inherent tensions in the alternatives require them to be approached with great care so that the advantages provided by the confessional

model are not lost. The problems of celebrating diversity without losing identity and coherence are significant.

Is Theology for Adolescents?

The purpose of catechises in a Catholic school is to strengthen pupils in their identity as followers of Christ. The techniques used are of value to the extent that they enable transmission and learning of the Catholic faith. Theological research may inform catechists but, the Church argues, there is a distinction to be made between those areas that are questions of opinion or dispute between experts and those which reflect the agreed teaching of the Church. At what point during their catechesis can the minds of children and young people assimilate theological research is debatable, but there are clear dangers in theological speculation with children before their Catholic identity is adequately formed.

A Transferable Model?

It seems to be generally acknowledged by educationalists and politicians of all parties that there is a need to raise standards of education and improve the effectiveness of schools. The effects of some past attempts to redefine the structure of state education have reduced diversity of provision, inasmuch as grammar, modern and technical schools have been replaced largely by comprehensives, though there are many different types of comprehensive school. An increase in diversity, by encouraging greater specialisation in schools along philosophical, ideological or religious lines, may bring to a greater number of pupils the potential benefits that seem readily available in Catholic schools where the community is more likely to be rooted in a shared vision and way of life than in the physical proximity of its members.

However, developing a clear distinctive mission similar to that provided by a shared religious faith may not be possible for many schools. In the current prevailing culture

which champions pluralism and encourages individualism, teachers may find it difficult to commit themselves to a single corporate vision. On the other hand, schools with a clear distinctive philosophy of life serving a population which has no agreed, shared vision or way of life will not be able to meet fully the disparate needs of parents or pupils.

The specific character of the Catholic school, as promoted by the Church hierarchy in the documents of Vatican II, should be found in high quality of religious instruction integrated into the education of the pupils, that arises from a particular religious view of human nature held and practised by the faith community. Without the existence of a faith community in the school evangelisation and catechesis is unlikely to succeed. In Catholic schools where such an approach is being made and where it is congruent with the beliefs and aspirations of Catholic parents, religious education becomes the underlying reason why Catholic parents are likely to prefer the school for their children. That degree of congruence, if attained, provides the conditions both for religious and academic effectiveness. If the same conditions which enabled the development of Catholic education since 1944 is accorded to other identifiable sub-cultural groups in society similar levels of school effectiveness may be achieved to that which has been shown possible in the Catholic sector.

The Need for Further Research

I have argued that, the values, attitudes and practices that arise from the traditional model of Catholic school, outlined in the documents of the Church and supported by the hierarchy, provide an environment that is particularly supportive of academic achievement, especially for socially disadvantaged pupils. I am well aware of the limitations in applying the findings of such a small scale study as this, and of case studies in particular, to a much wider context. Consequently, further focused research is necessary to add to the evidence

base on which future policy decisions can be made, at national, local and Church level, in respect of the provision of schools for minority populations.

Although my study has added to the body of available evidence, it is on a small scale and still only indicative. There is a need for large scale comparative research to establish the relative academic effectiveness of Catholic schools in relation both to other religious and secular institutions. The vast data base established by OFSTED provides an opportunity for researchers in England similar to that afforded to colleagues in the USA through the HSB studies. Using such information, it may be possible to establish with much greater certainty whether the indications of the superior academic effectiveness of Catholic schools already available in England are real or illusory. If those indications are found to be real, research projects will be required that seek to establish causality, which will be of value, not only to the Catholic authorities in devising and implementing appropriate policies for Catholic schools, but to government in planning the pattern of provision of schools to provide effective education for all pupils in the next millennium.

APPENDIX 1

MULTI-LEVEL ANALYSIS: PROCEDURE FOR COMPARING SCHOOL EFFECTIVENESS

In order to establish a measure of overall school effectiveness the data analysis is based on a comparison of the performance of individual pupils (the lowest level) in different groups (intermediate levels) in different schools (highest level). A model of the expected examination performance for each individual is calculated taking into account their gender, intellectual ability and socio-economic background, based on the level of achievement of the 'average' pupil with the same background characteristics, before further analysis or aggregating them within their schools.

For each pupil their total GCSE examination points score is recorded, together with measures of their intellectual ability and socio-economic status. The data are used to plot each school's performance in the sample using a comparison of individual pupils actual examination points score against their expected points score calculated from the model both to compare them and to establish an overall measure of school effectiveness. The method is as follows:

Stage 1 - Individual Pupils are Categorised by Gender

Stage 2 - The Performance of All Girls in the County Sample

- All the girls fall into one of a maximum of 20 sub-groups categorised by reference to their intelligence (non-verbal reasoning score) and their socio-economic status. These sub-groups are represented on a grid.
- For each category on the grid the individual girls are identified and their actual GCSE score noted. These are added together. A mean GCSE score for girls having those

background characteristics can be established by dividing the total of GCSE scores by the number of girls in the sub-group. This represents the score that one would expect the average girl having those intelligence and socio-economic characteristics to achieve. Any deviation from that score can be reasonably attributed to other factors, probably internal to the school.

Stage 3 - The Performance of All Girls in Each School in the Sample

For each school in turn:

- The numbers of girls in each sub-group are identified and multiplied by the mean GCSE points score for all girls in that sub-group established in Stage 2. This will give the total expected score for the girls in that sub-group in that particular school.
- The individual girls in each sub-group are identified and the sum of their actual GCSE points scores calculated. This will give the total actual score for the girls in that sub-group in that particular school.
- When the expected score and the actual score for each sub group have been calculated the school expected score and school actual score for all the girls in that particular school can be established by summing the sub-group scores.
- The school expected score and the school actual score are divided by the number of girls in the school to establish the mean school expected score and mean school actual score for the girls in that particular school.
- The individual actual score of all girls in the sample can be plotted and subject to regression analysis either to compare schools with the county, or against each other, by means of regression 'lines of best fit' drawn through the data points.

Stage 4 - The Performance of All Boys in the County Sample

- The same process as outlined above in Section 2 is used but for all the boys in the sample

Stage 5 - The Performance of All Boys in Each School in the Sample

- The same process as outlined above in Section 3 is used but for the boys in each school.

Stage 6 - Comparisons Between Schools - Regression Analysis

- The individual actual score of each pupil in each school can be plotted against fixed variables such as a measure of ability or an appropriate previous level of achievement and be subject to regression analysis. This will give a regression 'line of best fit' through the data points to illustrate random effects in each school by means of a sloping line.
- With the data available, the procedure can also be used to compare the performance of schools with different categories of pupils if required, giving a regression line through the data points to compare the performance of boys and girls in individual schools or particular schools with the total sample, delineated by gender or aggregated.

Stage 7 - The Combined Performance of All Boys Plus All Girls in Each School in the Sample

Using the data already calculated above for girls and boys separately, all the pupils in each school are taken in turn and for each sub-group for each school:

- The total expected score of the number of girls in that sub-group is added to the total expected score of the number of boys in the equivalent sub-group.
- The actual score of the particular girls in that sub-group is added to the actual score of the particular boys in the equivalent sub-group.
- When the combined expected scores and combined actual scores are calculated for each mixed sex sub-group, the combined expected and actual scores for school can be calculated by adding the sub-group scores together.

- The mean expected school score and the mean actual score is calculated by dividing by the total number of pupils in the school.
- These mean expected and actual school scores can be plotted on a graph representing overall school effectiveness. The data can again be subject to regression analysis.

APPENDIX 2

INTERVIEW SCHEDULES

Introduction/Preamble - Adult and Pupil Interviews

Thank you for agreeing to this interview. I am a working at Warwick University researching the way that Catholic schools put their educational philosophy into action. Anything you tell me will be treated in confidence and neither you nor the school will be identified in any way.

For the purpose of the interview, assume I am talking to you as an ordinary parent who has a child in a junior school in St. Paul's/St. Peter's catchment area. My child will be transferring to secondary school in September. I know nothing about St. Paul's/St. Peter's and am trying to find out all I can in order to make an informed choice for my child's secondary education. I have come to you for information. Based on your own knowledge of the school, would you please answer some questions.

Adult Interview Schedule

Initial Questions

1. What kind of reputation does St. Paul's/St. Peter's have?
2. What is specially distinctive about St. Paul's/St. Peter's school that would make it suitable for my child?
3. What would you describe as the school's most marketable features?
4. How would you describe the headteacher's style of school management?

Subsidiary Questions* - to be used/interjected as appropriate

1. How would your answer(s) differ if my child is/is not a Catholic?
2. What, if anything, is specifically Catholic about St. Paul's/St. Peter's?

3. In your opinion, what features of the school contribute to its academic success?
4. In your opinion, what is it that attracts Catholic/non-Catholic pupils to St. Paul's/St. Peter's?
5. Critics say that St. Paul's/St. Peter's is only interested in academically able pupils. How would you answer them?
6. Critics say that St. Paul's/St. Peter's does not provide a Catholic education. How would you answer them?
7. What is the worst thing a child could do at St. Paul's/St. Peter's, and how would it be dealt with?
8. What can parents expect of an academically able child at the age of sixteen after four years at St. Paul's/St. Peter's?
9. In your opinion, what has the school to offer pupils who are academically weak?

* N.B. only one alternative used in any single question.

Pupil Interview Schedule

Initial Questions

1. How would you describe what is it like to be a pupil at St. Paul's/St. Peter's school?
2. Give me some idea of the amount of work you are expected to do in a typical day.
3. What kind of reputation does this school have with pupils at? (a nearby school)
4. What would you describe as the best thing you find about being a pupil at St. Paul's/St. Peter's?

Subsidiary Questions* - to be used/interjected as appropriate

1. How would your answer(s) differ if my child is/is not a Catholic?
2. What, if anything, is specifically Catholic about St. Paul's/St. Peter's?

3. In your opinion, what features of the school help you achieve your academic success?
4. In your opinion, what is it that attracts Catholic/non-Catholic pupils to St. Paul's/St. Peter's?
5. Critics say that St. Paul's/St. Peter's is only interested in academically able pupils. How would you answer them?
6. Critics say that St. Paul's/St. Peter's does not provide a Catholic education. How would you answer them?
7. What is the worst thing you could do at St. Paul's/St. Peter's, and how would it be dealt with?
8. What do you think you will be able to look back on and thank the school for after four/six years at St. Paul's/St. Peter's?
9. In what ways would your answer(s) be different if you are very/not very bright academically?

* N.B. only one alternative used in any single question.

APPENDIX 3

CATHOLIC AND OTHER SCHOOLS: OFSTED DATA *

The previously unpublished data given below were presented to Diocesan Schools Commissioners at their annual spring conference held in Oxford in March 1996. It is collated from analyses of the reports of inspections of schools made under section 9 of the regulations of the Education Act 1992 undertaken during the period 1993-1995. The inspectors make assessments, under a number of pre-determined criteria, of the schools they visit. They are graded from one to seven; one being the best or highest, seven the worst. Composites of the criteria are used to describe overall categories of performance in a number of areas regarded as important indicators of the quality and standards of education provided. Based on the findings, schools are arranged into five performance groupings, with a sixth for those institutions where there is doubt about the validity of

Table A. i

CATHOLIC & OTHER SECONDARY SCHOOLS OVERALL PERFORMANCE

SCHOOL GROUP	No. of R.C. SCHOOLS	% of R.C. SCHOOLS	OTHER SCHOOLS	% OTHER SCHOOLS
1	22	22	290	20
2	53	53	679	46
3A	15	15	227	15
3B	3	3	123	8
4	0	0	69	5
Ungraded	7	7	92	6
TOTAL	100	100	1480	100

data provided by the inspection reports. Table A.i shows Catholic secondary schools performing, on average, better than schools generally. The size and nature of sample suggests the difference is real rather than due to chance, or sampling error.

Table A.ii suggests that Catholic schools on average roughly conform to the normal profile of secondary schools across the country, being located in slight better socio-economic environments but serving similar pupil populations. Consequently, the data imply that any differences are the result of different levels of school effectiveness rather than Catholic schools having more educationally advantaged pupils.

Table A. ii

CATHOLIC & OTHER SECONDARY SCHOOLS
SIZE & SOCIAL BACKGROUND

	NUMBER of SCHOOLS	SOCIO- ECONOMIC	% ELIGIBLE F.S.M.*	AVERAGE N.O.R
OTHER	1480	4.12	0.19	832
CATHOLIC	100	3.99	0.19	711

* Free school meals, used as a socio-economic indicator.

The overall grading of schools illustrated in table A.i is calculated as an average of the quality of education provided, the overall standards achieved and a measure of the school's ethos. The quality of education, shown in table A.iii, is an average of several factors:

the objectives of the lesson;
the teachers' command of the subject;
the lesson content and chosen activities;
the challenge and pace of the lessons;
the teachers' expectations of the pupils;
an assessment of the pupils' performance in class;
the teachers use of assessment to inform subsequent work;
the content, breadth and balance of the curriculum offered for all pupils;
the curriculum planning and organisation.

The schools' educational standards, also indicated in table A.iii, are a composite of the following five sub-items:

standards of academic achievements in relation to pupils' capabilities;
their competence in reading across the curriculum;
competence in writing;

competence in speaking and listening;
competence in numeracy.

The composite puts greatest weight on academic performance. It is calculated from the mean score on the four competencies averaged with the score for academic achievement. Schools are also judged on the efficiency with which they carry out their functions. The overall efficiency grading is an average of the inspectors' assessments in respect of:

the standards of financial planning and management;
the efficiency and effectiveness with which resources are deployed and used;
value for money.

On each of these performance indicators the lower mean scores of Catholic schools indicate their superior performance, particularly so in the academic standards achieved by their pupils

Table A. iii

CATHOLIC & OTHER SECONDARY SCHOOLS
OVERALL SCHOOL CHARACTERISTICS

	STANDARDS	EFFICIENCY	ETHOS	QUALITY
OTHER	3.27	3.22	2.91	3.27
CATHOLIC	2.97	3.19	2.51	3.14

The score for ethos is an average of five items; moral and cultural development, pupil attendance, behaviour and punctuality. Given the claim of the Catholic Church for a distinctive ethos in its schools, the large difference noted in the composite measure shown above in table A.iii is of particular interest. So, too, are other OFSTED measures of pupil's personal qualities. These include their spiritual development, the sense of community they help generated and the quality of relationships that exist between the pupils themselves and the pupils and staff. Again, table A.iv shows the Catholic schools have lower mean scores on all these measures, indicating that, across England and Wales, they are, on average, achieving better standards in those aspects than other schools.

Table A. iv

CATHOLIC & OTHER SECONDARY SCHOOLS
PUPIL AND INSTITUTIONAL QUALITIES

	SPIRITUAL	ETHOS			COMM'N'TY	RELA'NSHIP
		MORAL	ATT'ND'CE	BEHAV'OR		
OTHER	4.06	2.68	3.25	2.42	2.19	2.12
CATHOLIC	2.20	2.04	2.72	2.00	1.85	1.76

The extent to which these scores represent real differences can be seen in table A.v.* For each group of schools the mean and standard deviation are given. The means of the two groups can be compared using confidence levels which indicate the significance of any differences.

On the two composites Catholic schools have a lower mean score and a smaller standard deviation, indicating that the range is also smaller. Both of the confidence intervals for the standards of education exclude the value zero, showing that there is a significant difference in the levels achieved in Catholic and other schools. The 95% confidence

Table A. v

COMPARISON OF CATHOLIC AND OTHER SECONDARY SCHOOLS 1993-95

Confidence Intervals for the Differences Between Mean Scores

Aspect Assessed	Catholic Sec. Schools			Other Sec. Schools			95% Con. Int.		98.8% Con. Int.	
	Num	Mean	St Dev	Num	Mean	St Dev	2.5%	97.5%	0.1%	99.9%
Ed Quality Composite	100	3.14	0.63	1480	3.27	0.74	-0.26	0.00	-0.33	0.07
Standards Composite	100	2.97	0.76	1480	3.27	0.90	-0.46	-0.14	-0.55	-0.05
Pupil Behaviour	100	2.00	0.75	1427	2.42	1.05	-0.58	-0.26	-0.67	-0.17
Community Behaviour	100	1.85	0.73	1425	2.19	1.05	-0.49	-0.19	-0.58	-0.10
Overall Attendance	99	2.72	1.50	1423	3.25	1.60	-0.84	-0.22	-1.01	-0.05
Spiritual Education	99	2.20	0.91	1426	4.06	1.36	-2.05	-1.67	-2.16	-1.56
Moral Education	99	2.04	0.70	1427	2.68	0.98	-0.79	-0.49	-0.87	-0.41
Relationships at School	99	1.76	0.67	1422	2.12	0.92	-0.50	-0.22	-0.58	-0.14

* The information in this appendix, and especially the analysis and commentary on table A.v, is taken directly from data supplied by OFSTED, for which I am very gratefully indebted.

interval for the mean score for the quality of education provided in Catholic schools has an upper limit of zero. While this suggests that the quality of teaching would be better in Catholic schools in ninety-five out of every hundred cases sampled, it also indicates that the difference is likely to be small.

In individual aspects of pupils personal development and behaviour the differences between the mean score of Catholic and other schools are all significant. The 95% Confidence Intervals for the difference between groups all exclude the value zero so there is a real difference between them. The same is true at the higher 99.8 Confidence Interval, so that it is even more certain, based on the strong statistically significant difference in favour of Catholic schools, that they have a superior institutional performance.

The data suggests that their effectiveness in achieving higher standards has less to do with the quality of teaching than with the schools' functioning as a community and the effects it exerts on pupil's personal development and behaviour. It seems to re-inforce the possibility that qualities in the Catholic community, its culture and its methods of sustaining social cohesion may be causal explanations for the observed differential academic effects of Catholic schools.

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